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THE SPIRIT

OF

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE

FRENCH OF BISHOP CAMUS. Jean Pierre

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TO

THE MEMORY OF

JOHN BERNARD FITZPATRICK

LATE BISHOP OF BOSTON

IN WHOM MUCH OF THE SPIRIT OF

ST. FRANCIS OF SALES

WAS FELT BY THOSE WHO ENJOYED HIS

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

THIS TRANSLATION

IS DEDICATED

BY A

CLERGYMAN OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Acc: 5013

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SKETCH OF THE LIFE

OF

SAINT FRANCIS OF SALES,

BISHOP AND CONFESSOR.

> His thoughts were as a pyramid up-piled,
> On whose far top an Angel stood and smiled,
> Yet in his heart he was a little child.
>
> *Laman Blanchard.*

Among all the Saints whose lives Holy Church sets before us for our edification, there are few whose characters are so harmonious and so attractive as that of *St. Francis of Sales.* He is pre-eminently the Saint of meekness and Christian charity. He sprang from the ancient and noble family of the Counts of Sales, and was born at Sales, the seat of his family, about ten miles from Annecy, in Savoy, in the year 1567. In his infancy he was very weak, and his life was often despaired of by his physicians; but as he advanced in age, he became uncommonly robust.

His mother was a person of extraordinary piety, and could hardly bear to have him absent from her a moment, lest he might fall into temptation. She instilled into his young heart the sure principles of virtue and religion, and a dread of sin; and the first words his infantile lips ever uttered were words of prayer. His mother often repeated to him those touching words of the French Queen Blanche to her son, who now lives in history as St. Louis, "I had

rather see you dead than to hear that you had committed a mortalsin." He frequently accompanied his mother in her visits among the poor of the neighborhood of their residence, and was sometimes detected reserving his own food for their relief, and begging alms for them of his relatives. His sweetness of disposition attracted all who met him. He showed quick talents, and made rapid progress in his earliest studies. He manifested an early inclination for the ecclesiastical state, and after some objections on his father's part, he received the tonsure in the eleventh year of his age. He was then sent to Paris, where he completed his studies in rhetoric, and philosophy, in the schools of the Jesuits, with great success. He then devoted himself most assiduously to the study of theology, including a thorough course in Greek and Hebrew, during six years, under the most eminent masters. He never forgot his exercises of piety in his ardour as a student, but seemed to increase his devotions and austerities as he advanced in learning. When he was eighteen years old, his father recalled him from Paris, and sent him to the University of Padua, where he studied law, under the direction of the celebrated Pancirola.

His father had made many ambitious plans for his son's future career, and obtained for him an appointment as Counsellor of the Parliament of Chambery. Francis refused the dignity, and after some difficulty obtained the consent of his father, and received holy orders, with extraordinary devotion. His relatives secured for him the provostship of the Church of Geneva, and in this office, which he, with his usual humility, refused for a long time to accept, he commenced his brilliant and laborious apostolic career.

The province of Chablais had been forcibly obliged to accept the Protestant heresy some sixty years before this time, when the reigning Duke of Savoy wrote to the Bishop of Geneva that he had resolved to restore the Catholic

religion, and begged his assistance in the holy work. The scheme was generally regarded as hopeless and impracticable; but Francis and his cousin Lewis de Sales promptly volunteered for the enterprise. They arrived at Thonon, the capital of Chablais, in the autumn of 1594, and found there only seven Catholics. The Calvinists avoided him, and strove in every way to prevent his making the acquaintance of any of the people. They even conspired to take his life; but he converted, by his calmness and leniency, the very men who had been sent to assassinate him. He laboured nearly four years, however, without producing any great results. He was then assisted by a band of zealous Jesuits and Capuchin missionaries, and during the following year the Catholic religion was formally re-established in the province. St. Francis had several conferences with Theodore Beza, the leader of the Calvinist party at Geneva; and these things alarmed the Calvinists so much that they prevented a continuance of them, and hindered thereby the conversion of their chief, who died not long after, lamenting, it is said, that he could not see Francis.

In 1599, St. Francis was appointed coadjutor to the Bishop of Geneva, and the fear of the episcopal obligations weighed so heavily upon him as to give him an illness which endangered his life. He afterwards visited Rome, to confer with the Sovereign Pontiff concerning the missions of Savoy. In 1601 he visited Paris, and preached the Lent before the Court at the Louvre. The king, Henry IV, was charmed with his preaching, which brought many of the most obstinate among the heretics into the Catholic Church. The king often consulted him, and made tempting offers to induce him to remain in France, but without success. He also offered to nominate him to the cardinalate, but the Saint refused the dignity then, as well as subsequently, when it was offered to him from Rome.

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At about this time he wrote the two books, by which he is best known, the "Introduction to a Devout Life," and the book on the "Love of God." These books were almost immediately translated into all European languages, and have never lost the high place they then obtained in ascetic literature. At this time, also, he established the congregation of the Nuns of the Visitation, which was approved by Pope Paul V, and by him erected into a religious order: thenceforward his life was nothing but an unceasing round of missionary labours. He was almost constantly in the pulpit or the confessional; and when he was remonstrated with by his friends, who feared that such exertions would be too much for his bodily strength, said, that it was easier for him to preach a sermon than to find an excuse for the non-fulfilment of his duty. He died at Lyons in 1622, in the fifty-sixth year of his age, and the twentieth of his episcopate. His body was buried in the Church at Annecy with great honors. Many miracles are attested to have been wrought by his relics and his intercession, in addition to those performed during his lifetime. He was canonized, in 1665, by Pope Alexander VII, and his feast established for January 29, the day of the removal of his body to Annecy.

St. Francis was naturally of a hasty and passionate temper, but he so thoroughly schooled himself in the opposite virtues of meekness and moderation, that they seemed to be part of his nature. He appeared to be gifted with the power of attracting even those who were most opposed to him. His learning and eloquence might prove powerless, but his gentleness and benevolence never failed to win the most stubborn hearts. The celebrated theologian, Cardinal du Perron, said that he could *convince* the Calvinists of their errors, but it required the Bishop of Geneva to *convert* them. The Calvinists were certainly

the more obstinate heretics of their time, yet St. Francis brought seventy-two thousand of them into the Catholic Church. Even at the present day there are few Protestants who do not recognize the saintliness and apostolic character of the holy Bishop of Geneva.—*From the "Memorials of the Blessed," by the late Charles Borromeo Fairbanks. Boston: P. Donahoe*, 1861.

John Peter Camus, Bishop of Belley, and author of the "Spirit of St. Francis of Sales," was himself a most zealous and saintly prelate. He, like St. Francis, was of a noble family, being descended from Nicholas Camus, Lord of Marcilly, through his great-grandson John Camus, Lord of St. Bonnet in the Lyonnais.

He was fifteen years younger than our saint, being born in 1582, at Paris; but was not so much behind him in the episcopal office, to which, in consideration of his extraordinary learning and virtue, he was promoted at the age of twenty-six; for which a papal dispensation was necessary. He received his consecration, at the hands of St. Francis, on the 31st August, 1609, in the Cathedral of Belley; which town is some forty miles southwest of Geneva. We shall obtain a most beautiful view of his humility and of the saint's inimitable faculty of combining kindness and truth, on this occasion, in Part I, Chap. X. of this work.

He proved, on undertaking the duties of his position, that his superiors had not erred in their judgment, attending with the utmost energy to the administration of the affairs of his see, giving his personal attention to the instruction of the faithful, to the conversion of sinners, and to checking the ravages of heresy—to which his people were peculiarly exposed, owing to their neighborhood to the city which has sometimes been called the Rome of Protestantism.

Among the disorders which came under his notice, those

affecting some of the religious orders were particularly troublesome to him; their laxity and idleness being specially offensive to his active and energetic disposition. He went so far as to write a considerable work censuring their defects, entitled "Des Moines;" and was only induced to relax his severity to them by the representations of Cardinal Richelieu (*a*).

The book just mentioned, and that before us, are by no means the only ones, however, for which we are indebted to his pen. His moral, controversial and spiritual writings are very voluminous; perhaps too much so to have been all carefully considered. He has also left some works of a character less naturally to be expected from a clerical hand; namely, some novels, which he wrote, however, not merely to entertain the public, but to instruct it and to take the place, to some extent at least, of the many pernicious romances which were at that time, as now, too popular. The avowed tendency of these romances, it is true, was moral, but the incidents and conversations, which in such books really engross the reader's attention, tended to draw the soul from the love of God to that of creatures. The design of the Bishop was to remedy this defect, to make virtue attractive, and to turn the heart from the pleasures of the world as well as its vices, not merely by set reflections, but also by the events of the story. In this undertaking he was to a great degree successful; his productions became popular, and undoubtedly on this account did a great deal to promote the designed end, reaching persons who never would have read a work exclusively moral or religious. It is certainly much to be desired that the novels of the

(*a*) It is related that the Cardinal once remarked to our Bishop, that but for his acrimony against relaxed religious orders, he would be a *Holy Prelate*, and "were he a Pope, he would canonize him." "In that case," replied Bishop Camus, "we would both have our wishes!"

present day were written in this spirit, instead of making it their highest aim to glorify affections which are merely human and natural, though without doubt innocent when kept within proper limits.

Among the labors for the complete reformation of his diocese which the Bishop so energetically undertook, was the introduction of an active religious order, which should serve as help and an example to the clergy and people. He accordingly established a house of Capuchins at Belley; as also a convent of the Order of the Visitation, recently instituted by St. Jane Frances of Chantal, assisted by his own beloved St. Francis.

Notwithstanding his love of work, we find that the responsibilities of his bishopric gave him great anxiety, as we know has been the case even with those saints whom God has even miraculously called to this charge; and accordingly as soon as he felt entitled to the relief, he obtained permission to withdraw to the Cistercian Abbey of Aunay in Normandy, and retired thither, naming John of Passelaigue for his successor, expecting to finish his mortal life in recollection and prayer. But this wish was not to be gratified; his eminent gifts were not to be allowed to remain thus concealed. His services as Vicar-General being earnestly desired by the Archbishop of Rouen, Francis de Harlay, he consented from a spirit of charity and obedience to expose himself again to the cares and distractions of a life in the world. In this new position, as in his former one, he labored devotedly, and acquired the love and admiration of his flock, as he had at Belley; yet he could not help feeling that it was not a selfish inclination, but the will of God which had called, and still continued to call him to a life of retirement. He therefore determined to follow this movement of his heart; not, however, now to retreat to the Abbey, but to the Hospital of the Incurables at Paris, where

his fervent desire for charitable works could be fully gratified without encroaching upon the time required for uniting his soul to God, and preparing for appearance before him. But even here he was not to be suffered to rest; for the King, Louis XIV, named him for the see of Arras; and hard as the sacrifice must have been, the Bishop, whose aim was always to do the will of God, submitted to what seemed to be a manifestation of it, and accepted the nomination. This final offering, however, was all that was required of him; for before the arrival of the bulls of installation, he departed this life April 26, 1652, at the age of 69. He was buried, according to his wish, at the Hospital.

In him the Church of France lost one of her brightest ornaments, and religion a most able defender, whose virtues, devotion, and zeal would have been sufficient to have made him worthy of everlasting remembrance, without the additional light cast upon him by his association with the glorious servant of God whose imitator he was, and whose words and actions he has recorded in the volume before us.

PART FIRST.

I.—TRUTH MUST BE CHARITABLE.

OFTEN did Blessed Francis urge upon me a lesson, which he knew I stood in great need of, yet it will prove useful to all who have others in charge. We should learn that "the Truth which is not charitable is uttered by a charity which is not true."

He had been informed, on reliable authority, that at the beginning of my Episcopal ministry I exhibited, in my visitations, a bitter and impatient zeal. Indeed I was indiscreet, and often gave reprimands full of asperity and rudeness.

One day he took me to task in earnest; and with a prudence, discretion and skill, equalled only by his sweetness, he poured into my soul those golden words, which I have ever since remembered. "Surely the heart cannot be possessed of true charity, if charity does not season the words of truth which one may feel obliged to utter in the correction of others."

II.—HOW TO KNOW WHETHER THE TRUTH EMANATES FROM CHARITY.

Once I asked our Blessed Father, by what means we should know whether a correction was prompted by charity. He replied, with that correctness of judgment which was a guide to all his actions, "Truth emanates from charity, whenever we speak that truth only for the love of God,

and for the good of him who is reprimanded; or, as St. Augustin has it, 'we should correct others with love, not from a desire to inflict an injury, but for the sake of amendment.' Should you administer the correction from selfish motives, you attain nothing (*a*).

"If in correcting another, you aim at aught else than the honor of God, and the eternal welfare of him who is corrected,—inasmuch as the glory of God is promoted by the reform of the latter,—the truth uttered in the reprimand does not emanate from a spirit of charity, but from some other source. Hence far better to suppress a truth, than to utter it with bad grace: else you might as well serve up a dish badly prepared, or give a medicine out of time. Shall we then unjustly hold the truth back? By no means; but we must impart it with justice; for the justice of truth, and the truth of justice are based on charity. A judicious silence is ever far better than an uncharitable truth."

III.—ANOTHER MARK BY WHICH TO KNOW WHETHER TRUTH EMANATES FROM CHARITY.

Once I asked the Blessed Father the other means, by which to know when a correction is prompted by charity. With that meekness of heart which sweetened all his words he replied, "When it is given *in a spirit of gentleness*" (Gal. vi. 1). Gentleness, in fact, is the great friend of charity and its inseparable companion. In this sense, St. Paul calls it *kind*, and says "that it *beareth all things and endureth all things*." He often held up for our imitation the good Samaritan, who poured both oil and wine into the wounds of the waylaid man. It was a saying of his, that it takes more oil than vinegar or salt to make good salad.

(*a*) Serm. 82, *al.* 16, de Verb. Dom. c. 3.

Often did he say to me, "Be always as kind as you can, and never forget that a spoonful of honey will catch more flies than a hundred barrels of vinegar. On a strait, better to sin on the side of kindness; too much sugar never spoiled a cake."

"But," I remarked, "truth is always a truth, no matter how it is uttered, or how it is taken; and I quoted St. Paul's words to Timothy, *Preach the word; be instant in season, and out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke with all patience and doctrine.*"

To which he answered, "The zest of this apostolic lesson consists in those words, *with all patience and doctrine.* 'Doctrine' here means 'the truth,' which must be uttered *with all patience.* In other words we must be ready to meet the opposition it may create, and not to expect that it will always be received most graciously. If the Son of God was made the butt of contradictions, his doctrine, which is the truth, shall be marked by the same sign."

Whoever undertakes to teach others in the ways of justice, must feel prepared to put up with men's asperities and injustice, and take ingratitude for his reward.

IV.—ON CHARITY AND ON CHASTITY.

When I entered upon the duties of my Bishopric, I complained to our Blessed Father that two virtues warred with each other in my heart.

Charity, I added, strong and robust, fears nothing, and boldly aspires to magnanimous deeds for the glory of God Charity can do all things with God, from whom it is inseparable. It braves death, hunger, and thirst—poverty and persecution, and the sword—the past, the present, and the future, angels and men, prisons and tortures, in fact all creatures, for it *is strong as death;* and in battle as fierce as hell.

Charity is patient and sweet: it believes, hopes, endureth all, regardless of its own interest, fears not to displease men provided it can please the beloved One, and it lays living and holy offerings for acceptance before his Divine eyes. Charity is enterprising, strong, bold, determined and audacious.

On the other hand, chastity is a tender virtue, delicate, shy, trembling, shrinking at any sign, starting at the faintest noise, fearful of any approach, and afraid of every thing.

The least look frightens it, as was the case with Job, who had *made a covenant with his eyes* (ch. xxxi. 1); the least careless word gives it trouble; even a fine sigh arouses its suspicions; it looks upon a dainty dish as a snare: to indulge in a laugh is an impropriety; an ambush is laid in every company; the reading of amusing books appears as terrific as a rock; in a word chastity walks about like the famous being that was all eyes and ears, or like the traveller that, carrying on his person a wealth of gold and diamonds, has to cross a dense forest where many are the caves of robbers and assassins: like him, chastity shrinks and hides itself at every noise, as if it had the ruffians at its heels.

Charity is urged on to assist all neighbors whether sick or in good health, poor or rich, old and young, regardless of age, sex or condition, seeing God in all, and all things in God: whereas chastity is conscious of carrying a peerless treasure in frail vessels, and feels that many are the ways by which that treasure may be lost. What is to be done in this perplexity; how can the two virtues be made to agree together?

But here is the admirable answer of our Prelate:—"A careful distinction should be drawn between persons constituted in dignity, with a charge committed to them, and

those who, living a private life, have to look only after themselves. The former must turn their chastity over to the safe keeping of charity, and provided their charity is true, it will give a good account thereof, and will moreover be to it as a bulwark; whilst private persons will do well to place their charity in the safe keeping of chastity, and walk with utmost circumspection and reserve.

"The reason whereof is, that Superiors are by their station in life exposed to great many dangers; but they are assisted by a particular grace, inasmuch as they do not tempt God by temerity, which would be the case with those who should expose themselves to danger without a special vocation. For it is written '*He that loveth*, and much more he who seeks *danger, shall perish in it*'" (Eccles. xiii. 27).

V.—POWER OF KINDNESS.

An ecclesiastic was once condemned to prison for some misdemeanor. After a while he showed symptoms of repentance. With many tears and loud protestations he begged to be allowed to throw himself at the feet of the good Bishop, who had already many times forgiven him. The officers of the *Curia*, aware that the Saint's merciful heart would be moved at first sight, no matter how much the culprit deserved a signal punishment, were opposed to grant the request.

At last, however, he obtained an interview, and thereby the deserved punishment was transmuted into an heroic act, and most exemplary on the part of our Saint, for God in his Providence has resources impervious to human prudence.

Led to his Bishop, the criminal threw himself at his feet, crying for mercy, pledging himself to God that he would change his life, and where scandal had been so great, good

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example should in future abound. Whereupon the holy bishop also threw himself on his knees before the erring priest; and while the latter, with sobs, and overwhelmed, was imploring mercy and pardon, the Blessed Father said, with tears: "So do I beseech you, through the bowels of the mercy of Jesus Christ, in whom we all hope, that you will have pity on me, as well as on all the priests of this our diocese, and of the whole church, whose honor you imperil by your scandalous life, which affords a chance to our enemies to blaspheme our holy faith. I beseech you to have pity on your own soul, which you are plunging into eternal ruin. Oh! in the name of Jesus Christ, become reconciled with God in true penance. I adjure you by what is most holy and sacred in heaven and on earth, by the blood of Jesus Christ, which you have trampled under foot, by the goodness of that Saviour whom you have crucified anew, by that spirit of grace, which you have outraged so much."

The grace of God spoke through the lips of His servant: and the remonstrance wrought such an admirable change, that the sinful man became thenceforward a most exemplary priest.

VI.—REMARKABLE PATIENCE

The Bishop once became security, to a large amount, for a friend of his. As the note became due, the holder urged payment from the Prelate, who on his part, pleaded, with utmost kindness, that the debtor was worth a hundredfold the amount of the note, and there should be no cause of alarm: but he was in the army, engaged in the service of his prince, could not then return, and begged of him to have a little patience.

Either because he was in need of funds, or out of spite, the creditor would accept no excuse, but urged his claim

over and again, in season and out of season, raised a cry on the matter, and let no occasion pass that gave him a chance to speak of it.

The Prelate's only request was to have time to hear from his absent friend. But the man will make no allowance, and annoys the Bishop with rude manners and indecent words. One day Francis said to him :—"Sir, I am your pastor, would you have the courage, instead of contributing to my support, like a faithful sheep, to take even the bread from my mouth? You know in what strait I am, and that I have scarcely enough for my support. I have never in my life possessed the amount you now claim at my hands, for which, however, I became responsible from motives of charity. Will you seize my goods and chattels before those of the principal debtor? I have a little patrimony; you may have it; there is my furniture, bring it under the hammer; sell every thing,—I am at your will; I only beg of you to love me for God's sake, and not to offend him with anger, hatred, or scandal. On this condition I shall feel contented."

The other replied that these were only fine words and empty promises, and he became uproarious, but without the least ruffling the Bishop's temper; he even breaks out into insults, while the Saint receives them like so many blessings. Yet, pained to the heart to witness these grievous offences against God, to stop definitely such proceedings, and not to allow that his patience should be occasion of so much sin, he says with an admirable serenity of countenance: "Sir, my indiscretion in giving this security is the cause of your anger; I shall do all in my power to satisfy you; but after all I wish you to understand me well when I say, that were you even to pull out one of my eyes, I would with the other look upon you as one of my best friends."

The man withdrew abashed, but still murmuring words

of threat. On receiving a summons from the Blessed Father, the principal debtor immediately comes to his deliverance, and by a prompt payment rids him of the troublesome creditor. The latter in his turn is touched with remorse and shame, and makes proper atonement to the Bishop, who receives him with open arms, and afterwards was wont to call him his re-conquered friend.

VII.—HIS INGENIOUS WAY OF EXCUSING OTHERS.

I censured once in his presence some country gentlemen, who, being as poor as Job, still made a great show and forever boasted of their nobility and of the valorous deeds of their ancestors.

He remarked:—"What would you have them to do? to make themselves doubly poor? The more they have of honors, the less at least they think of their poverty. They are like the young Athenian, who dreamed in his folly to be the wealthiest man in the land; but when by the interposition of his friends he was cured of his folly, he entered a suit against them, for having forced him to surrender his pleasant imagination.

"What would you? You know it is a peculiarity of the nobles to have the best of hearts when they are in low water. Their generosity is like that of the palm-tree expanding itself the wider according as the weight of its branches is heavier. Would to God, they had no greater faults! we should rather complain of their unfortunate and infamous duelling;"—he added with a deep sigh.

Once a grievous crime, committed by a certain person, perhaps more through weakness than from wickedness, was loudly denounced, and its hideousness depicted in very strong colors in his presence. While the unpleasant topic was discussed, he exclaimed from time to time:—"Human frailty! human frailty!"—again:—"Oh! how weak we are

in our infirmities!" Anon: "What else can we do of ourselves, but fall?"—and again—"We would do worse, did not God hold his hand over us, and Himself lead us after His divine will."

At last not being able to turn the subject of the conversation, he cried. "O happy fall! it will be the cause of much good! This soul would be lost, with many others, had it not lost itself now; its present loss will prove its own gain, and the gain of many others."

Some shook their head at the prediction. But it was fulfilled. The true repentance of the sinful woman, her deep humiliation and sincere conversion, not only gave great glory to God, but brought reformation and fervor in the community where she lived.

VIII.—ABOUT REPRIMANDS.

The good father often chided me for my faults, and at times he remarked, "I hear that you are grateful for it: in fact, it is the greatest proof of friendship I can give you; and I shall know whether you really love me, if you pay me back in coin. To tell the truth you treat me very indifferently in that respect; you are too cautious; love is blindfolded—it does not stop at any consideration,—it rushes to the front and at once. It is because I love you much, that I cannot bear the least imperfection in you. I wish my son to be, as St. Paul wished his Timothy to be, *blameless*. What would appear to me only a fly in another, grows into the size of an elephant in you, because I love you, indeed, as only God knows. Should not a surgeon be blamed, were he to allow his patient to die because he had not the courage to probe his wound? A lash of the tongue given at the proper time may heal the soul as effectually as a stroke of the knife properly given may prove the cure of a limb. A judicious bleeding has often restored a man to life; and

a reprimand administered with judgment may save a soul from eternal death."

IX.—HOW HE LOVED HIS PRIESTS.

One of his clergy had been guilty of some misdemeanor. The officers entreated the Saint to allow justice to take its course. At last he tied the hands of his charity, and allowed them to have their own way. The prisoner was subjected to severe punishment during his confinement; and after his deliverance, was forbidden to exercise his functions for six months. Far from becoming reformed, he fell into greater misdeeds, and ultimately was deprived of his *benefice* and banished the diocese. Whilst in prison none could have shown better disposition: he wept and begged, and made many promises. Even when he was told that he would be deprived of his income, he submitted, seemingly, with touching resignation. But having proved so often false, the door of clemency was closed against him.

Some years after, another ecclesiastic was committed for faults equally as grave. The officers were determined to treat this case the same as the former, and prevent the delinquent from taking advantage of the merciful disposition of his Bishop. The latter insisted to have the case brought under his cognizance: protesting that he was ready to resign his own dignity, provided he could do it at the feet of the culprit; averring that he would be able to read in his eyes the sincerity of his repentance. At last he peremptorily commands that he should be brought to him. To this the officers demurred. "Then," said the prelate, "if you will not allow him to appear before me, you will not certainly hinder me from going to him. You will not let him out of jail; have the goodness, then, to lead me to him, that I may share in his captivity. The unfortunate brother who cries for our assistance must be consoled. I pledge

my word that he shall not leave the prison, except with your good will." And to the prison he wends his way with the officers. Scarcely had he seen the poor man at his feet, when he threw his arms around his neck, and, bathed in tears, embraced him, and gave him an affectionate kiss; and then turning to the officers, "can't you see," he cried, "that God has already pardoned this man? Can there be a judgment against those who belong to Jesus Christ! If God justify him, who shall condemn him? Indeed, I shall not be the one. Go, my brother!" he said to the culprit, "go in peace, and sin no more; I know you are truly penitent."

The ecclesiastical officers remarked that he who seemed so penitent was only playing the hypocrite; the other man, whom they had been obliged to *depose* at last, had exhibited even stronger signs of repentance.

"Who knows," said the Bishop, "but he would have become truly penitent, had you treated him with kindness? Take care, lest his soul be one day claimed at your hands. As for myself, were it agreeable to you to take me in security for this man, I am willing. I certainly think that he is touched to the heart; and should he prove false, so much the worse for him."

The culprit, with a flood of tears, begs that such punishments, as they may think fit, be imposed on him in his prison, he will submit to all; any chastisment will prove lighter to him than the distress of his conscience; and he is ready to resign his *benefice*, of his free will, should his Bishop say so.

"I would be sorry to say it," replied the Blessed Father; "I have strong hopes that as the tower has, in its fall, crushed the temple, on its rising again will prove its ornament."

The officers yield, and the gates are thrown open. After

one month of suspension *a divinis*, he is re-admitted to the functions of his office, in the discharge of which he became so exemplary, as to perfectly fulfil the prophecy of the Saint.

As, sometime after, they were drawing a parallel between the obduracy of the former and the conversion of the latter, he uttered those remarkable words—"Better to make converts by means of kindness, than hypocrites by those of severity."

X.—HIS TALENT FOR ENCOURAGING PEOPLE.

In 1608, King Henry IV. nominated me to the See of Belley, and I was consecrated by Blessed Francis, on the 10th of August of the following year, in the cathedral of my diocese, having been dispensed by the holy Father, in the point of age, being only five-and-twenty years old. The dispensation was granted in view of the great wants of that diocese, which had been without a Bishop for four years. I became troubled about my consecration, performed as it had been before the canonical age. I laid my trouble before the Saint, who encouraged me in different ways—the wants of the diocese—the marks of esteem received from so many persons distinguished for position and piety—the judgment of the great Henry—and last the command of the Pope; it was no time now to look back, but I should, with the apostle, *stretch myself forth, to those things that are before.* "You have entered the vineyard," he added, "at the first hour of your day; beware lest you should, by sluggishness, allow others to get the advantage of you both in work and reward."

I said one day, "Dear Father, however much people think you just and holy, you have certainly done wrong in consecrating me so young."

He replied, "Indeed I have committed that sin, and I fear God will not pardon me, for I have not yet felt the

least compunction for it. I entreat you, by the bowels of the mercy of our common Master, that you will so live, that I may never have reason to regret it. See, I have officiated at the consecration of many other prelates, but only as assistant Bishop: I never consecrated any but yourself: you are at once my first sketch, and my masterpiece. Let us hope God will assist us. He is our help and our salvation. Why should we fear? He holds our lives in his hands, why should we be alarmed?

XI.—ABOUT HUMBLE WORDS.

He never allowed words of humility unless they were sincere and true. He was wont to say, that such expressions were—"the flower, the cream, and the elixir of a vanity most cunning. The truly humble do not wish to appear, but endeavours to be such. Humility is so timid that it fears its own shadow, and cannot hear its own name without a shudder, lest it should be lost. He who berates himself, seeks by a tortuous way to be praised; he is like the man at the oar, who turns his back to the point at which he aims with his whole strength.—It would render him miserable were he believed in what he says of himself: it is only from pride that he wishes to appear humble."

XII.—DIFFIDENCE OF HIMSELF.

The blessed man had once to pass through Geneva in order to meet the Baron de Luz, the King's lieutenant in Burgundy, who had been sent by his Majesty to confer with our Saint on affairs of religion. The journey was one of great danger; but, when afterwards a friend in his presence freely commented on the rashness of the enterprise, he took all the blame to himself, exculpating those who, feeling sure that no one would have dared to attack him

or do him villainy, had in fact led him through that dangerous pass.

I then remarked, "Well, my Father, the worst that might have happened would have been the best for you. Had they knocked you down, they would have made a Martyr of the Confessor."

"Are you sure," he said, "that God would have granted me that grace, and given me the perseverance necessary to attain that crown?"

I replied that my opinion was well grounded, inasmuch as it were better to suffer a thousand deaths than to renounce the faith.

To this he answered, "I know well enough what I should have done; just what you have said. But am I a prophet to know what I would do? St. Peter, the patron of my diocese, was indeed as resolute as I am; yet, you know how he behaved at the mere words of a female servant. *Blessed is the man that is always fearful* (Prov. xxviii. 13), who mistrusts his own weakness, and does not trust himself, but rests all his confidence in God. *We can do all things in Him who strengtheneth us:* without him we can do nothing."

XIII.—HOW SUPERIORS CAN PRACTICE OBEDIENCE.

"My Father," I said one day, "how can those who are in authority practice the virtue of obedience?"

He replied, "far better than those who are under subjection."

I was astonished at the remark, and begged him to explain.

Said he, "Those under obedience, generally are accountable for their actions to only one superior. His commands they are bound so to prefer to all others, that they cannot comply with another's request unless they obtain permission of

their lawful superior; whereas, those who are in authority have by far more ample opportunities to practice obedience in the very act of commanding others. In fact, when they bear in mind that it is God who has constituted them in authority, who commands them to command others, and they command only to obey His commandments, is it not evident that their very command is an act of obedience? Even monarchs, who are subject only to God, and to Him alone have to give an account of their actions, can practice this kind of obedience. Add, that there is no power on earth, however exalted and sublime, which is not held accountable to a superiority of some kind or other, at least in spiritual things, and in what concerns the direction of one's soul and the management of one's conscience. And yet, there is a still higher degree of obedience, to which superiors can aspire, and it is pointed at by St. Peter, when he says, "*Be ye therefore subject to every human creature for God's sake*" (I Pet. ii, 13) (*a*). Through this general obedience to every creature, *we become all to all that we might* gain all to Jesus Christ. In the practice of this obedience we look upon all people as our superiors, and become servants of all."

I have been a keen observer of his demeanor towards those who called on him. He treated all, even to the meanest, as if he was their inferior. He never dismissed any one, or refused to hear or see any person, never gave the least sign of being annoyed, or bored, or wearied—no matter how importunate one might be, or how much of his time they would tax.

It was one of his sayings, "God has placed me here—he expects this much of me—how can I help it? While I am doing this, I am not bound to do anything else. The will

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(*a*) *i. e. To every man in the order of society.* Archbp. Kenrick, ad. loc.

of God is our centre. Out of it there is nothing but trouble and anxiety."

XIV.—HOW BLESSED FRANCIS LOVED JUSTICE, AND DESPISED TEMPORAL THINGS.

Once a distinguished personage addressed himself to our Saint to obtain from him a certain Monitory (*a*). The Bishop did not think there was a just cause for it; and endeavored with the best reasons, and in the kindest manner, to make him desist. But the other took it in high dudgeon, and loudly denounced what he called a lack of justice in the Bishop, who to his impertinence made no other reply than he was sorry that his conscience would not allow him to comply with the request. "I am a friend," he said, "even to the altar, but no farther,—no farther than the service of God and the freedom of my conscience will allow me. Ask of me what is just, and you shall have it."

The plaintiff, becoming still more irritated, appealed to the Senate of Chambery, obtained a requisition for a Monitory, and an order on the Bishop to sign it. The man of God stood as firm as a rock in the midst of the ocean. He made no other reply, than that he had a soul to save, and a conscience to respect, and that he was ready to account for his motives in rejecting the application. Things were pushed so far, that they threatened to attach his property.

The storm, however, passed away; but when the occurrence was mentioned in his presence, he very kindly remarked, "Had they taken my property from me, they would have done me the greatest favor in the world; for

(*a*) A kind of warrant, regarding ecclesiastic or religious matters, which can be issued only by a Bishop, where they have Ecclesiastical Courts. The officers spoken of at Nos. V. and IX. belonged to such an institution.

they would have then rendered me entirely spiritual, and I would thus be enabled to judge them; for is it not written, *the spiritual man judgeth all things, and he himself is judged by no man*" (I Cor. ii. 15.)?

On another occasion he remarked that the loss of his temporalities, by a seizure of the court, would have proved an immense gain to him; "for," he said, "my flock will not allow me to starve, and I have more trouble in refusing than in accepting their offers."

XV.—HIS MARVELLOUS DEFERENCE TO OTHERS.

It is an act of justice, not of humility, to submit himself to one's superiors. Friendship, politeness or good breeding prompt us to yield to our equals. But only true humility, teaching us that we are nothing, will make us submit and yield to those who are inferior to us, and make us ready to be trampled on by all. Blessed Francis was the embodiment of this doctrine. He obeyed his body servant, in what concerned his going to, or rising from bed; dressing or undressing, as if he were the servant and the other the master. On a summer morning he awoke earlier than usual, and called his servant to come and wait on him. But the latter was fast asleep, and did not hear the summons. Thinking that he might not be in his room, the Bishop enters it, and finds him enjoying his sleep so well that he had not the heart to awake him; and so he dressed alone, and then went to his prayers and studies. His attendant afterwards enters the library and superciliously asks the Bishop who had helped him to dress. "Myself. Am I not old enough and strong enough to do it?" "Was it then so much trouble to call me?" "Not at all, my child; in fact I have called many times: then thinking that you might be out, I arose and went to your room, where I found you sleeping so sweetly, that I had not the

courage to awake you." "Now, you make fun of me!" "O my friend, what I have said is truth, and I meant no ridicule by it; but I said it in good humour: well, I promise you that in future I shall keep on calling until you hear me, and have got out of bed; and, as it is your wish, I shall never again dress without your assistance."

XVI.—ADMIRABLE SWEETNESS OF MANNERS.

He had in his service a young man of good looks, fine address, and excellent disposition. Some one had an eye upon him as a desirable son-in-law. He laid the matter before his saintly master, who said to him, "My dear, I love your soul as I do mine, and there is no kind of happiness I do not wish you, and will not procure for you, if it were in my power. You cannot doubt it. You are young, and may be it is your youth that has taken somebody's fancy; but I think that you are not old or experienced enough to go to housekeeping. Think well on it; for, once under way, it will be useless to regret. Matrimony is an order wherein profession precedes the noviceship. Should there be a year of probation, as in cloisters, few indeed would profess. Then, what have I done to you that you want to leave me? I am old—will soon die, and then you may look out for yourself, as you please. I will leave you to my brother, who will help you to settle advantageously." The youth threw himself at his master's feet and begged his pardon for having thought of leaving him, and protested that he would remain faithfully with him in life and death. "No, my son," added the Prelate, "I do not mean to cramp your liberty, I rather would, like St. Paulinus, give mine to save yours; I only give you a friend's advice, as I would have given to my brother were he in your circumstances."

Thus did he deal with his servants, whom he held in the place of brothers and children.

XVII.—HOW HE PREPARED HIMSELF BEFORE MASS, AND OF HIS THANKSGIVING.

I was reported to him as being unnecessarily long in my preparation before mass, thereby putting the people to inconvenience. He was paying me his usual annual visit at Belley. Having, one morning, a large number of letters to write—it was eleven, and he had not yet celebrated mass, which he never omitted except he were sick. Dressed in rochet and mozetta he comes into the chapel, bows to those who were waiting for him, and, after a short prayer at the foot of the altar, dresses himself and begins the holy sacrifice. When mass was over, he again prayed a short time, and then joined us with a countenance as serene as that of an angel, and conversed with us until we were summoned to dinner, which took place very shortly after. I watched all his actions, and wondered at the shortness of his preparations for, and thanks after, mass. As we sat alone in the evening, I took advantage of the old filial freedom he allowed me, and remarked: "My Father, it seems to me you were pretty quick for a man of your size. I observed this morning both your preparation and your thanksgiving, and I must say you were prompt indeed."

He replied, "O Dieu! but I thank you for telling me the plain truth," and he embraced me; "for the last three or four days I have had something of the kind to tell you, but did not know how to go to work. But what do you think of your slowness, which wears out those who are waiting for you? It is a general and loud complaint, indeed. Very probably you have not yet heard of it; people are so loath to tell a Bishop what they think of him! I am sure they have charged me with this duty, because none loved you as I do. Believe me, I have good securities for what I say, although there is no need of endorsements: *a little of that of which you have a surplus will do*

both of us good; you will be the quicker by it, and I will proceed more slowly. Now, is it not fine that the Bishop of Belley should reprimand that of Geneva because he is too quick, and the Bishop of Geneva that of Belley because he is too slow? is not this the reverse of the world? Then how much are those who wish to assist at your mass, interested in your *agios* (angl. here, *private profits*), and so many prayers and acts of devotion in which you indulge in your private oratory, then think of those who are anxiously waiting to speak to you after Mass."

"But, my father," I replied, "how shall we prepare ourselves for Mass?"

He answered, "Why do you not make a suitable preparation in the morning, during your meditation, which I have reason to believe you never fail to make?"

I added, "I arise at four in summer, but do not go to the altar until nine or ten o'clock."

"Well then," said he, "do you think that this interval of four or five hours is of any account before Him *in whose sight a thousand years* are *as yesterday*, which is past" (Ps. lxxxiv. 4).

"And what about thanksgiving?"

"Make it at your evening prayers. Is it not becoming that in your evening examination of conscience, you should ponder on an action of such paramount importance, and is not the examination a part of the thanksgiving exercise? Both the preparation and the thanksgiving can be made, and with a great deal more leisure at night and in the morning. By so doing, you will not put any one out of countenance; it will be done with more reflection; it will not interfere with any duty of your ministry, and will not annoy anybody."

"But," said I, "will it not give cause to scandal, to see it is done so quickly, when the Lord does not wish to be adored in a hurry?"

"Hurry as much as you choose," he concluded, "God is ever in advance of us. It is the Spirit that sets out from the East, and bloweth at the same time at the West. All is present before Him: there is neither past nor future with Him: neither can we run to be in advance of Him."

I acquiesced in his advice, and I felt far the better for it.

XVIII.—BE NOT TROUBLED BY THE TRIALS OF YOUR MINISTRY.

"Be on your guard against the temptation of giving up your charge and resigning your bishopric for the sake of retiring into private and solitary life. Your spouse is holy [he meant the diocese, to which he wedded me with the ring of my episcopal consecration], and far more able to sanctify you than the believing woman of whom the apostle speaks. True, she places in your arms a multitude of spiritual children, who afflict you with pains little short of martyrdom: ah! but remember that in this bitter bitterness (*amertume très-amère*) you find the peace of your soul, that peace of God which surpasseth all understanding. But should you give up your charge for the sake of rest, God would probably permit that your tranquillity were disturbed by disappointments; very much like the good monk Leonicius, who in his solitude, lost all those sweet consolations which he enjoyed whilst managing the affairs of a very large monastery, from which office he had, under the plea of devoting himself to contemplation, importuned his superior to remove him. Know, that God hates the peace of those whom he has chosen to do his battles. He is the God of armies and of battles as well as the God of peace."

I could never forget the impression made on me by these words.

I had scarcely been consecrated by him at the age of

twenty-five (with dispensation by the Pope), when he ordered me to exercise at once all the functions of a Bishop, say Mass publicly every day, administer all sacraments, visit the diocese, preach, and teach the catechism; in a word I should not omit the least duty of my sacred ministry. I went to work with a will, but one day I could not help complaining to the Saint, as I felt extremely fatigued and almost worn out. He replied: "Is it not written that *a woman, when she is in labor, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world?* (John xvi. 21). You should feel honored that God employs you for the deliverance of so many poor souls, their rescue from sin, and their admittance to grace! It should be with us as with the vintager and the harvester, who never feel so happy as when they are borne down by heavy weights. Who has ever heard them to complain of too much vintage or too much harvest? Yet I know you wish to find some sympathy in me. Very well; be it so! I say then, that as we call martyrs those who have confessed God before men, we may with safety call martyrs those also who *confess* men before God, aye both confessors and martyrs. It is thus I feel encouraged to cling to my cross and remain on it to the end."

"Oh! then, indeed, more than martyrs are those who confess the scrupulous," I cried.

"Indeed, indeed, you are right," he answered, "it is like exposing a face besmeared with honey to a swarm of bees."

XIX.—THE BISHOP OF BELLEY TRIES TO IMITATE THE BLESSED FRANCIS IN HIS WAY OF PREACHING, AND FAILS.

He was my beau ideal in everything, and I took into my

head to imitate his way of preaching, not indeed the flights of his eloquence, or the depth of his science, the force of his reasoning, or the correctness of his judgment, or that order and justness of arrangement, which, blended with great sweetness of manners, added a charm to his powers, that moved the very rocks—oh! no: all that was beyond my reach.

I did as certain flies do, which, unable to steady themselves on the smooth surface of a mirror, cling to the frame. But it was a great mistake that of attempting to imitate his exterior manners, his gesture and his pronunciation, which were very sedate and calm, whilst my delivery was just the contrary, and thus I made an uncouth mixture, to the great wonderment of all who knew me. I spoiled my own original, and made an exceedingly bad copy of him.

The Saint was told of it, and one day, in a certain roundabout way, he said, "*À propos* of sermons, there are queer reports. I am told that you have taken great fancy to imitate the Bishop of Geneva in your preaching." I thought to cut short all remarks by saying, "Well, it is not a very bad pattern after all; don't you think he preaches better than I do?"

"Ah!" he added, "There! I made a raid upon a fair name! No, indeed, he does not preach so very bad after all. But the worst of it is, that I am told that you are so awkward in your endeavors, that whilst you spoil the Bishop of Belley, you are very far from representing that of Geneva—in fact they cannot recognize either—so much so that it will become necessary to follow the practice of that wretched limner, who was obliged to write underneath his daubs the name of Storge, whose portraits he pretended to represent."

"Let him alone, and you will see, that little by little, of an apprentice he will become a master, and his copies will surpass the originals."

"Jokes aside, you spoil your own: you ruin a fine structure, by patching it over, against all rules of nature and art; it will be with you as with a piece of camblet, which, once badly creased, can never be smoothed, and you will become incorrigible. *O Dieu!* could one's nature be changed, what would I not give to be changed into yours! I do all I can to shake myself off—I try to quicken myself; and the more I struggle, the less headway I make. I have a difficulty in joining words, and still more in giving them utterance. I am heavier than the stump of a tree; and I can neither move myself nor stir others: and thus I sweat a good deal, and advance not. You go with full sails whilst I ply heavily on the oar; you fly, and I creep like a snail; you have more fire at the top of one of your fingers than I have in my whole body: yours is a wonderful readiness, and a bird's swiftness. Meanwhile it is said that you affect to weigh your words, measure your periods, and thus you trail your wings and languish, and make your hearers feel drowsy."

I confess that the lesson cured me of my innocent error, and I fell back on my natural way.

XX.—CHARITY MUST BE CHASTE, AND CHASTITY CHARITABLE.

Allusion was once made in his presence to the fall of a young woman of very respectable connections. The Saint took up the subject at once. "*It is very strange*," said he, "*that all should have so much charity and zeal for chastity, and not a particle for the chastity of charity.*" Then he continued: "All have a great zeal for the beauty of chastity, even those praise it, who do not practice it. There are some who observe it not in themselves, yet require its practice in those under their authority. In this they are to be praised, for too much watchfulness cannot

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be employed in the care of a treasure so rich, especially as even public decorum has an interest in common with the honor of families. But would to God we had as much zeal for the chastity of charity! By these words I mean the purity and integrity of that virtue which is the mother, the queen and the soul of all others; where it exists not, all other virtues are dead, and have no merit before God. Now, it is really distressing to witness so much charity impure and false, neither unalloyed nor genuine. And such is that in the practice whereof we even offend the charity of God and of our neighbor, under the very pretence of charity; which is an act of unparalleled treachery, as it stabs the very traitor who practices it. I often say that zeal is a dangerous virtue, inasmuch as few know how to practice it judiciously. Many a zealous person might well be compared to those slaters who, in roofing a house, break more slates than they lay on the top thereof. Only by bending to God in all things and all things in God, we can secure the purity and virginity of charity, of which very few are jealous, as even God is jealous of such charity as was burning in the heart of the Apostle."

You may well believe that by these words he scattered to the wind any purpose of wounding his heart with remarks which would dishonor God, aiming as they did at the fair name of a neighbor.

XXI.—HOW ANXIOUS BLESSED FRANCIS WAS NOT TO DISTURB HIS MEEKNESS.

Once they brought to him a young man, to receive a severe reprimand. He, however, spoke to him with his usual meekness, but perceiving his obstinacy he wept over him and foretold him a miserable end. When told afterwards, that the mother had cursed her son, "Ah!" he cried, "so much the worse; if her words have been heard,

she will have cause to curse her own curses. The unfortunate mother of a more unfortunate child!"

His words proved prophetic. The young man met his death in a duel; his body was eaten up by wolves and dogs, and the mother died of a broken heart.

Now it happened that some one took him to task for his too great meekness in correcting the young man. "But what could I do?" he replied, "I tried my best to arm myself with an anger that would not be sinful. I took my heart in both my hands, but had not the courage to hurl it at his head. And, then, to be candid with you, I was afraid to waste in a quarter of an hour that little supply of meekness that I have with great labor gathered in twenty-two years, like a little dew, within the vessel of my heart. The bees work many days in preparing the little honey which man consumes in one swallow. And, again, what use to squander words when you are not listened to? That young man could not be reasoned with; the light of his eyes, I mean that of his judgment, had forsaken him. I could do him no good, and I would perhaps have done harm to myself, like those who plunge into the waters and are drowned with those whom they wish to save. Charity should ever be prudent and judicious."

XXII.—DID THE APOSTLES TRAVEL IN CARRIAGES?

A. D. 1619, the Bishop went to Paris, with the Cardinal of Savoy, who was to assist at the marriage of his brother, the Prince of Piedmont, with Christina of France, sister to the King.

A Protestant gentleman requests to see our Prelate, and is led into his room. Without even the commonest civilities, "are you," said the stranger, "the person whom they call the Bishop of Geneva?"

"So they call me, sir."

"I would like to know of you, whom I hear everywhere spoken of as an apostolic man, whether the Apostles went about in carriages?" enquired the other.

The Saint was taken a little by surprise; yet he thought of the Apostle St. Philip, who, as the Acts relate, travelled in a carriage with the eunuch of Candace, the Queen of the Ethiopians. Accordingly he made reply that certainly the Apostles did ride when convenience or an opportunity offered itself.

The man shook his head; "Where can you show me that in the Scriptures?" but the Saint told him of Philip on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. "But the carriage," replied the other, "was not his own, it belonged to the eunuch, who invited him to a seat." "Now did I say that he owned the chariot, or, only when an opportunity presented itself the Apostles rode in carriages?"

"Very well," added the man, "but to see carriages all gilt, and all embroidery, and so rich that the King has no more costly ones, nor drawn by handsomer horses, nor led by drivers in more gorgeous costume—that's what we do not read in the Bible, and I am not edified to see one like you who professes to be a Saint, and is held as one, riding in them. Oh! fine Saints, indeed, who go to heaven in a coach-and-four!"

"Alas!" replied the Bishop; "those folks in Geneva (*a*), who hold all my property, have clipped the grass so close that I have barely enough to live decently on what has been left. I have never had a carriage of my own, nor have I the means to possess one."

"Is not that magnificent carriage, in which I see you every day, yours, then?"

(*a*) The revenues of the See of Geneva had been confiscated by the Calvinists, and not even his house could the Bishop occupy in that city; but he was obliged to take up his residence in Annecy.

"Indeed, it is not. But you may well call it magnificent, as it belongs to his Majesty, and it is one of those set apart for the use of those who, like myself, belong to the suite of the Princes of Savoy. You should have known, by the liveries, that it belongs to the King."

"Well I am satisfied now and I love you the more for it. Then you are really poor?"

"I make no complaint of my poverty. I have enough wherewith to live decently, without any superfluity. And, were I to feel the straits of poverty, I would be wrong in complaining of that which Jesus Christ has chosen for his own portion, during all the days of his life here below, living and dying in the arms of poverty. Yet, as the family that has given me birth belongs to the States of Savoy, I have esteemed it an honor to follow the Cardinal of Savoy in this journey, and assist at the celebration of the alliance contracted by his brother the Prince of Piedmont with madame the King's sister."

All which pleased the Protestant so much that he promised to hold our Saint always in great esteem, and took leave of him perfectly satisfied.

XXIII.—THE BLESSED BISHOP ACCEPTS THE CHALLENGE OF A PARSON.

While the Bishop was preaching a course of Lectures in Grenoble, the concourse of people, both Catholics and Calvinists, was so great that the Protestant Houses were deserted. One of the ministers, well known for his turbulent spirit, broke out in the most insolent declamations against the Saint, and challenged him to a regular dispute, which the latter accepted. A personage highly esteemed by all and of great authority, expostulated with Blessed Francis, lest he should be exposed to insults, as the challenger was known to have a *mouth of hell* [une bouche d'enfer] and a

tongue as venomous and intemperate as was ever heard to utter infamous things.

"Good!" replied the Bishop, "it is just what we need." But as his friend insisted that the parson would offer him indignities, and would have no more regard for him than if he were a common man, "So much the better," he added; "it is just what I wish: oh! the glory that God will receive from my humiliation!" "But," urged the other, "will you expose your dignity to be insulted?" "Our Lord," answered the Saint, "has endured more than one insult; has he not been overwhelmed with them?"

"Oh! but you start from very high!"

"What must I say, then? I hope God will grant me strength to bear more insults than the man can ever heap on me; and if we are only bravely humble, God shall be the more gloriously exalted. You will see a heap of conversions upon that; a thousand will fall on the left and ten thousand on the right. It is the Work of God to draw glory from our humiliation. Did not the Apostles go from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer ignominy for the name of Jesus? Let us have courage; God will be with us. Those who trust in Him shall never be in want, nor shall they ever be confounded."

Meanwhile the Great Adversary, lest he should lose in the game, suggested so many reasons of human prudence to the friends of the minister, in whose strength they had not much confidence, that they succeeded in stopping all proceedings, by the interposition of the King's lieutenant, who was yet of their profession.

XXIV.—HIS FONDNESS OF AN ECCLESIASTIC, WHO HAD BEEN HIS TEACHER.

The Bishop had been, in his youth, under the charge of

an ecclesiastic of great virtue, for whom he ever after entertained the highest regard. He had been under his guidance during his course of studies in Savoy, Paris, and Padua. He always called him his father and his master: and when he had become Bishop, he appointed him Canon of his Church, provided for his support, and made him a guest of his house and table.

The old gentleman, on his part, felt so anxious about whatever concerned his pupil, that the least remark not altogether favorable to his ward vexed him painfully. The good Bishop often remonstrated with him, that it was out of all reason to be so sensitive about the reputation of his disciple. "What?" he would say: "am I all perfection? am I a Saint?" "I wish you to be one!" was the reply.

"And if even I was, have not the Saints their censors and scoffers! were they ever free from the scourge of persecution, or did they ever escape the lash of wicked tongues? What has not been said against our Saviour? Did not St. Paul reprimand St. Peter? and was not St. Paul himself reputed a fool on account of his eminent knowledge?"

But the good man would not be satisfied, but incessantly called him to account for what he, at least, fancied to be faulty, and that with a freedom that would have taxed the patience of any other man. Such freedom was warranted only by the ardent zeal of the master, and the unsurpassed meekness of the disciple. So it happened, that after Blessed Francis had been consecrated Bishop, at the age of thirty-five, he admitted to his audience all persons indiscriminately, that he might be the salt and light of all, inasmuch as God had placed him above the rest. But the good master condemned it as unbecoming the episcopal dignity; above all he could not bear that women should take up so much of his time with their petty concerns. Yet the holy Prelate held himself as a debtor to all, and would exclude no person.

Once the old gentlemen pressed him very hard on this point, and urged him to get rid of so many importunities, to save his time, that could be employed in more profitable business, and, above all, to avoid the danger of uncharitable remarks to which he exposed himself.

The Bishop replied, "*Monsieur d'Aage*, what do you wish me to do? The charge of souls does not imply the duty of upholding the strong but of helping the weak. Either this part of my duty must be given up, or one must give himself to it wholly. God hates the sluggard, and requires to be served at full measure. I undoubtedly like the prudence of the serpent, but yet much more do I love the simplicity of the dove. God, who is charity, has given me this charge of charity, and He knows that I look to His will in all things. As long as I cling to Him, He will not forsake me: He never forsakes those who seek Him, and seek Him with their whole hearts. Let us have courage, He will help us, and will not allow us to fall or be wounded. He will bear us up in His own hands. His aid is all powerful, and those who rest on Him cannot perish. He can draw us out of the abyss of the earth, and as equally prevent us from falling therein. *He killeth and maketh alive: He leadeth down to hell and bringeth us up again.* By His side we need not fear thousands of enemies, and with His aid we become valiant to surmount every difficulty."

XXV.—ON PERFECTION.

Blessed de Sales once remarked that "nothing he heard so much talked about as perfection, and nothing he saw less practiced. Every one has fashioned a perfection of his own. Some make it consist in austerity of manners, while others place it in the mortification of the senses: to one the giving of alms is the cream of perfection,—for another the approaching to the sacraments: others will say that prayer

makes a man perfect, whilst others require that prayer should be passive and superexcellent: and finally, according to certain Christians, no one can be perfect without having received a superabundance of those extraordinary graces which are gratuitously given. Yet they are all mistaken, because they mistake causes and means for their effects.

"As for myself," continued the Saint, "I know of no other perfection but that of loving God with our whole heart and our neighbor as ourselves. Any other kind of perfection not established on this must needs be false. Charity is the only tie of perfection among Christians—the only virtue which properly unites us to God and to our neighbors, and in charity our end consists, and the perfect consummation of all ends. We only deceive ourselves when we form other plans of perfection.

"Virtues, be they ever so great and excellent, are nothing without charity,—not even the faith that moves mountains or fathoms mysteries; the gift of prophecy, or the tongues of angels and men, the giving in alms all that one may possess, or even a martyrdom by fire—all these things are nothing without charity. Whoever liveth not in charity is in death: and whatever deeds are performed, not inspired by charity, no matter how seemingly good, are dead work, and of no merit for eternity.

"I know very well that austerities, prayers, and all virtuous practices are good means to advance in perfection, provided they are directed by charity. Yet, we should not place perfection in the means thereof, but in the end to which these means lead; else we stop on the way, instead of walking straight to the end."

XXVI.—ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

Once I asked him how I could attain perfection. He replied, "We shall love God with all our heart, and our neighbors as ourselves."

"I do not ask in what perfection consists," I replied, "but the way we shall walk to obtain it."

"Charity," said he, "is a wonderful virtue: it is both the end and the means, the path and its turns; it is the way that leads to itself, and itself is perfection. When St. Paul wished to show the most excellent road to perfection, he descanted on the merits of charity (*a*). Without it no virtue can live, hence it is called the Life; no one can, without it, attain the supreme end, which is God, hence it is called the Path; no virtue can be true without it, hence it is called the Truth. It is the life of the soul, because it is through charity that we are transferred from the death of sin into the life of grace. Charity alone can give soul and life to faith, hope, and all other virtues. As the soul is the life of the body, so is charity the life and perfection of the soul.

"I know all that," said I, "but I wish to be told how we are to love God with our whole heart, and our neighbors as ourselves."

To which he answered, "You must love God with your whole heart, and your neighbor as yourself."

"There!" said I again, "I know just as much as before. I beg for the proper means to know how to love God with one's whole heart, and one's neighbor as oneself."

He seemed to enjoy my suspense, and he repeated, "The most proper, the easiest, the shortest and the surest means to love God with one's whole heart *is* to love him with our whole heart." But then he added, "Many others besides you, ask me the systems, means and secrets of perfection, and I answer them all, that I know of nothing so fine as to love God with our whole heart. The secret to attain this is, to love. As by studying we learn how to study, and speaking teaches us how to speak, running how

(*a*) I. Cor. xii. 12.

to run, working how to work, thus does loving teach us how to love God and our neighbor. Any other system will lead people into mistakes. The proper way, then, to love God, is to love Him evermore. Keep always advancing, and never look backward. Let novices begin, and by dint of love they will soon become masters. Let those who have made good progress still keep going on, without ever thinking that they have reached the goal. Love in life can always increase even to the last moment of it: and let those who do not feel to have advanced much say with David, *And I said, now I have begun* (Ps. lxxvi. 11.); or with the great St. Francis:—when shall we begin to serve God with our whole heart, and cherish our neighbors as ourselves?"

XXVII.—ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

"I know very well," said I once, "that Christian perfection consists in charity, and that this charity is to love God for his own sake, and our neighbor for the sake of God: but how to love?"

"Love," he replied, "is the main passion of our heart, and it leads us to wish what is good. To love God and our neighbor with a love of charity (which is the true love of friendship) implies to wish good to God for His own sake, and to our neighbors in God and for the love of God."

"But," said I, "how can we wish well to God who is the sovereign good, and essentially good?"

"We can," said Blessed Francis, "wish Him good in two ways. First, by feeling pleased with what he possesses, and for that nothing can be added to the greatness and infiniteness of his intrinsic perfection. Second, by wishing Him what He has not, either *in fact* if it were in our power to procure it; or *in wish* and desire if we cannot procure it."

"But what good does not God already possess?"

"I was about telling you. It is the extrinsic good, that which he receives from the honor and glory procured unto Him by the creatures, especially the rational creatures. When we love God truly, we endeavor to procure to Him this exterior glory by our own exertions, referring unto Him our whole being and all our actions, not only those that are in themselves good, but the indifferent also. And not satisfied with that, we employ all means in our power, and we endeavor our best to bring our neighbor to his service and love, so that God may be honored in all circumstances and by every one. To love our neighbor in God means, to rejoice in the good they possess, inasmuch as they use it to the honor of God, and to lend them all the aid at our command for that purpose; and, again, to have a zeal for the salvation of their souls, and to work therefor as if they were our own, because God wills it and finds pleasure in it. In this consists true charity, and the solid and sincere love of God for the love of himself, as well as the love of our neighbor for the love of God."

XXVIII.—OF THE LOVE OF OUR ENEMIES.

A person greatly in the confidence of our Saint told him once, that she found nothing so difficult in the practice of Christian perfection, as the command to love one's enemies—"and I," answered Francis, "I can't tell how my heart is made, or how it has pleased God to shape it, but in fact I find no difficulty whatever in obeying that command; on the contrary, it is so pleasant for me to comply with it, and I feel a joy so extraordinary and peculiar, that had God forbidden my loving them, I would find it extremely difficult to obey Him."

When keenly insulted by a certain individual (v. ante, No. vi.), he replied, with an indescribable sweetness, *should you even pluck out one of my eyes, I would nevertheless look upon you with utmost affection with the other.*

"It is true," he added to his friend, "that it costs our nature a little; but, after all, we must agree with David, when he says:—*Be ye angry* (Ps. iv. 5), or according to another version—Be a little ruffled, but *sin not.* Why? shall not we put up with those whom Jesus Christ, on his cross, holds up for mercy before his Father? And yet we have not been crucified, nor have we been persecuted unto death, nor have we resisted to the blood! But who can but love that dear enemy for whom Jesus Christ has prayed, and for whom he died? And mark now! He not only prayed for those who had nailed Him on the cross, but even for those who persecute us, and in us persecute Him, as he expressed to Saul on the road to Damascus—*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* which means, Saul persecuted Jesus in his followers. It is true, we are not bound to love the vices of our enemy, or the enmity he bears us, for all this displeases God; but we must separate the sinner from his sin, the gold from the dross, if we wish to be like unto our Saviour. It is only a small fire that gives way before the breeze, whereas large fires increase in strength with the violence of the opposing winds. The best fish is to be found in the salt waters of the sea, and thus the best souls wax in grace with the food of contradictions, whose waters cannot extinguish charity, on the contrary, buoy it up higher and higher as the rising water of the flood bore up the ark of Noah."

XXIX.—HOW BLESSED FRANCIS MADE ECCLESIASTICAL APPOINTMENTS.

He held regular examinations before he preferred any of his clergy, and I have heard him often say that but for this rule, the charge of his diocese would have been unbearable to him. He wished to have his hands tied on this subject so that a system should be followed, which

would prevent any interference with his feelings or a bias of his judgment. Accordingly he established a council of learned theologians and exemplary ecclesiastics, over whom he only presided, and he gave his vote only in favor of those whom said council had, after strict examination, judged to be fit for the place.

XXX.—ABOUT MEMORY AND JUDGMENT

Once he complained of his memory failing. I remarked that the deficiency was amply compensated by his judgment. The latter is the master, and the former the servant; and, in sooth, a servant that will often make much noise without any good result, unless judgment takes the helm.

"Yes," said he, "it is true that a strong memory and correct judgment do not often dwell in the same place. They are like two incompatible duties. They may be found in one and the same person in a degree of mediocrity, but very seldom both eminent and perfect."

I ventured to name the great Cardinal du Perron, a prodigy of memory and wisdom. He acknowledged the example in a eulogy inspired by the great esteem in which he held that personage.

But in truth those two qualities are so opposite to each other that it is but seldom they do not chase one another out of each other's way; one is all vivacity, whereas the other works only by the plumb. "Thus it is," said I to him, "that you have no right to complain of your own share, for that you possess the best, which is judgment. Would to God I could give you more of memory, which often embarrasses me with its promptness. It overwhelms me with an abundance of ideas, such as to perplex me

whilst preaching, and even in writing*; and I wish I had some of your judgment, a quality in which I am wanting."

At this he laughed heartily, put his arm on my shoulder, and said, "In truth you are honest about it. I never met another man who, like you, acknowledged that he had not some judgment; in fact, this is a commodity whereof those who possess the least boast of having the most, and I invariably find that none is so deficient as he who imagines himself the owner of an abundance of it. It is very common to hear people complaining of a want of memory or even of treachery of the will, and they do not mince the matter either; but no one likes to taste this beatitude of the poverty of spirit or judgment; all seem to have it in horror. But be of good cheer, age will supply the deficiency; it is one of the fruits reaped by experience and growing years. We cannot say the same in regard to memory. It is one of the inevitable shortcomings of old people, and thus I have no hope to amend mine. But provided I have enough of it left to remember God, I wish for no more."

* "Bishop Camus had a powerful imagination, and his imagination looms over all his works, written as they are with a wonderful facility, but with a style half moral and half burlesque, teeming with striking metaphors and gigantic ideas, yet often too verbose and wanting in polish. *This indefatigable writer has published upwards of two hundred works.*" F. X. Feller, Biogr. Univ.

PART SECOND.

I.—ABOUT HUMILITY AND CHASTITY.

Blessed Francis was wont to say that "there are two virtues which should be practiced incessantly, and their names hardly ever mentioned or at least so seldom that the rare occurrence should pass for silence;" he meant humility and chastity.

"*Mon Dieu!*" I answered, "I do not think so, Father. I wish that the welkin rang with no other but these two beautiful names, and that they were written on every tree, and engraved on every stone in characters of gold."

"My reason for saying what I did," replied the Bishop, "is that it is impossible to mention and to praise them, either in oneself or in others, without injury. For, in the first place, no human tongue is, in my opinion, equal to the task of expressing their worth, and to praise them unbecomingly were to debase them. Secondly: to praise humility would tend to make one love it through self-love, and lead men to it through a false entrance. Thirdly: in praising one for his humility, we may tickle his vanity and flatter him dangerously; for he will certainly lose in humility accordingly as he thinks that he possesses it, and he cannot but think so when he hears himself praised for it. But as for chastity, firstly: its praises will always give rise to some thought of the opposite vice, and expose it to some breath of temptation; secondly: to praise it in any one, will expose a person to the danger of a fall, and throw a stumbling block on his way; it will inflate his vanity, which, filling a treacherous sail, will dash him headlong

against the rocks; thirdly: we cannot in fact trust our past chastity; but we must always fear, for it is a treasure which we carry in very brittle vases. Hence I think it the part of prudence to mention those virtues as seldom as possible. But at the same time they should be practiced as faithfully as possible—the one being the brightest jewel of the soul, the other the handsome and charming garment of the body. Yet I do not wish to carry the scruple so far as to prohibit their ever being mentioned, even in terms of eulogy. They cannot be esteemed and praised too much. But what of that? the most luxuriant growth of praises is nothing compared with the smallest fruit of practice."

II.—ABOUT LONG LIFE.

When the Bishop was about forty-two years old, I remarked to him that his tall and stout frame, well-built chest, fine constitution, his prudent care of his health, and great moderation at his meals, should promise him a long life.

He answered with a sigh: "The longest life is not always the best, but that is the best which has been spent in the service of God; remember what the prophet says: 'Wo is me, that my sojourning is prolonged! I have dwelt with the inhabitants of *darkness;* my soul hath been long a sojourner' (Ps. cix)."

I thought that he was grieved at being away from his See, and out of his "dear Geneva," as he called it, and therefore added, "By the river of Babylon, there we *sit* and *weep*, when we *remember* Sion" (ib. cxxxvi).

"Oh! no," answered he, "it is not this exile that makes me lonesome; am I not even too comfortably situated in this our city of refuge—this dear Annecy? I speak of the exile of this life; as long as we are here, are we not exiles from God and our own country? 'Unhappy

man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord' (Rom. vii. 24)."

"You have no cause," I rejoined, "to feel displeased with this life, where everything smiles around you. You are greeted everywhere. You are respected by all your friends, and you are honored even by the enemies of your church. You are the delight of all who approach you."

"It all amounts to very little," said he, "and we cannot rely upon it. Those very persons who shouted *Hosannah* to the Son of God, three days after clamored for his *crucifixion*. On the other hand, I hold my soul dear above everything else; and I assure you that were I offered as many days of life as I have lived, but without chagrin, harassments, adversities, or inconveniences—aye more, in full possession of every desirable prosperity and endearment, I would make a wry face. Oh, little, indeed, are temporal things to him who looks up to heaven! I have always in mind that beautiful saying of St. Ignatius, 'Oh how vile is this earth when compared to heaven!'"

III.—HIS CARE OF THE SICK.

Once we called together to see a noble lady in my diocese, who lived in the country, very old, and so sick that she had received the last sacraments. She was perfectly resigned and calm, having arranged all her affairs; but she was only troubled because her children took no rest by day or night in their anxiety to see to her comfort. "And I, my good mother," said the Saint, "am never so comfortable in time of sickness as when I see my relations and domestics taking great pains around me. And the reason is, because I know that God will repay them abundantly for their services to me, as such offerings please him much. And in fact, were those who serve us either in

health or sickness to aim at pleasing us and not God, they should be pitied, whereas they should be an object of envy when they serve God in our persons."

The presence of our Saint by the bed of the sick was like that of angels, one of inspiration. He had ready short sentences suitable to every one's condition, he uttered them slowly and in sweet tones; at times asking the sick to repeat them after him, or at least accompany him with their heart, and he always let a pause intervene between the utterance of them—such as "O Jesus! I give myself to thee..... I abandon myself into thy hands..... O God! I am Thine..... Save me for Thy glory's sake..... O Father! I place my soul, my body, my whole being at thy disposal..... O God! that Thy will may be done..... yes, Lord Jesus! Thy will, not mine....." And by certain insinuating ways of his own, he made the patient relish what he said.

It was a torture to him to see those in agony tormented with long exhortations. That is not the time for long preaching or even long prayers. The main point is to keep them submissive to the Divine will, which is to be their eternal element and perpetual occupation in heaven.

He sometimes accompanied criminals to be executed, and towards them he followed the same system as when assisting the agonizing in their bed.

After hearing their confession, he gave them time to breathe; then, he suggested, at intervals, acts of faith, and of hope, and love of God, lastly, of sincere sorrow for their sins, together with submission to the will of God, and entire abandonment into the arms of His infinite mercy; but he never discoursed long.

Some of those unfortunate wretches were so admirably helped by him that they approached the scaffold even with joy, expressing a preference to dying thus prepared, with

the Saint by their side, than to live in danger of offending God again. It was a favourite sentence of his that "by affectionately kissing the feet of God's justice, we will surely find ourselves in the arms of His mercy, and that it is impossible for those who trust in the Lord to be confounded."

IV.—HIS GREAT CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

I once complained of the great burden which an episcopal charge is, and had I known it beforehand I should certainly have declined it.

"Indeed it is for you to complain!" answered he. "Yours is only a little garden, entirely free from the weeds of heresy. How loudly would you lament had you the charge of a diocese so heavy as mine, the sink of all errors and the refuge of all apostates?"

"But I think," said I, "that there is not in all France a diocese better disciplined, or more exemplary than yours, or more amply furnished with good pastors and wise and virtuous ecclesiastics."

"Alas!" he replied, "it is true that God, who is all goodness, sends the wind proportionate to the sails, and helps us to draw profit from our trials; or else, had not God allowed us this little good seed of piety, we would be like another Sodom. Yet we lament on the banks of this great river which flows out of our Babylon, and we are cheered only by the blessed hope that the Father of light will one day clear up this darkness, and will let the sun shine over this wretched people who now sit in the shadow of death. You would groan, indeed, had you this burden to carry."

"But," I answered, "why trouble yourself about outsiders, who have voluntarily withdrawn from the authority of the Church their mother? The sheep around

you are so docile as to be your joy and your crown in the Lord."

"I take you at your word, faithful servant," said he, "Why not look upon your own fold as you do on mine? Do you believe I regard your sheep as less docile than my own? We should be just, and not to set so much value on the good which God does to others as to contemn or ignore that which he imparts to ourselves. It betrays a mean soul to hear one say that 'his neighbor's harvests are always the largest, and his cattle the fattest.' We should bless God for the one, and not to be ungrateful for the other."

"At all events," I answered, "it is but a heavy burden for both of us."

"True, were we to carry it alone. But it is a yoke, carried in company with our Saviour, who lifts the whole of it, inasmuch as he carries both the charge and ourselves."

"And what do you say of the account we shall have to give?"

"We have to deal with a master who is lavish of his great mercy on all those who invoke it. He will quit us of a debt of ten thousand talents if we beg it of him. We must entertain towards him feelings of confidence corresponding to his goodness: he should be served with fear, indeed, but still this fear should not prevent our being cheerful. It is not a good humility which begets despondency."

V.—SOLITUDE: ITS DANGERS.

Some one qualified a solitary life as holy and perfect before our Saint, who remarked that "it had its faults as much as a life in the world, and that as there were good and bad companies, so there was a good and bad solitude: *Good* when God draws us to it, as it is said 'I will lead her into the wilderness; and I will speak to her heart' (Os. ii. 14):

Baal, whereof it is written, 'Wo him that is alone' (Eccles. iv. 10). If by only retiring into a solitude we could become saint and perfect, perfection and sanctity were an easy acquisition."

But yet, it was remarked, temptations and occasions of sin are not so many in a solitary life.

"There are devils in desert places as well as in the midst of cities. We are held up by grace everywhere and we may fall anywhere. Lot, who was a just man in the most infamous of cities, when in solitude committed obscenities which make us shudder. Man carries himself everywhere, and his miseries follow him like the shadow of his body. Many deceive themselves as to the belief that they possess certain virtues, because they are not infested with their opposite vices. There is a wide difference between not having a vice and possessing the virtue contrary to it. Not to be foolish is a good start towards attaining wisdom, but is therefore such a man wise?

"To abstain from sin is not to do good, although this abstinence is a kind of good: it is somewhat like the ground on which a building is to be erected. Virtue does not consist so much in the habit as in the act. Habit is a quality in itself idle, which indeed disposes one to do what is right, but it does nothing, unless the inclination is brought to act.

"How shall he, whom nobody commands, learn obedience? how learn patience without contradictions? how fortitude in the absence of trials? how is humility to be practiced where there is no superior? and how will a man exercise friendship, when, like a savage, he shuns his fellow-men, whom he is bound to love as himself?—There is a number of virtues which cannot be practiced in solitude, and yet, on their practice we shall be questioned at the last judgment; as in the case of mercy we are told, that 'Blessed

are the merciful because they shall obtain mercy' (Matt. v. 7)."

VI.—DO GOOD, AND LET PEOPLE TALK.

When I was going to preach the Lent in Paris, he taught me not to care for the world's opinion, by relating the following anecdote:

"The superior of a certain college had intrusted the care of the tower-clock to an old inmate in order to relieve the dulness of idle time. But after awhile he found that he had never given a command less faithfully fulfilled. 'What?' said the superior, 'to alter the pendulum twice a day?' 'Alack!' quoth the other, 'I have peace from no quarters.' 'How now?' 'Well; if the clock is a little slow, the workmen at the college make complaints, and I advance it: but, then, those in the town are down upon me, and to please them I again put back the time. And then, again, new complaints, so that my poor head is kept in a continual din, and feels as if it were the bell on which the hammer falls.' Then the superior said: 'Good sir, I will give you an advice, which, if you follow it, will set everything right. When the clock is too fast, just you tell them who complain of it that you will see to it, and set it right; and if it should be too slow, tell the complainants again, my children, leave it to me, I'll fix it. But mind, now, never alter the pendulum, and let the clock work, in its high road, as it lists. Give all good words and they'll let you alone, and you'll have peace.' Now to your case: you will be made the butt of many contrary remarks. Should you mind them, there will never be an end to it. What to do, then? give good words to all. But you go on, on your high road, and follow your own natural course, and alter it not for any suggestions, that you may receive, often clashing with one another. Look only to God, and abandon yourself to the lead of the spirit of grace. It matters not

how men will judge us whilst we do not seek to please them. God alone is our judge, he sees our inmost hearts and the deepest recesses of darkness."

VII.—WHAT HE THOUGHT OF MY PREACHING.

Having once to preach at the Convent of the Visitation, and knowing that the Saint was to be there, with a large concourse of people, I spared no pains in my preparations. As we afterwards were alone, in his room, he said: "Well, it was a success; everybody was pleased with your performance, and all praise your eloquent and well-studied panegyric. But I know one who was not pleased with it."

"What have I said to displease that man, for I care not to know his name?"

"Yet I wish you to know him."

"Who can he be, then, that I may endeavour to please him next time?"

"Had I not great confidence in you, I should never name him; but as I know you well, I will tell you. Here he is."

We were alone—so I cried, "It is you, then!"

"Just so," he replied.

"Well," I said, "I would rather have your approval than that of the whole assembly. God be praised, that I have fallen into hands, which punish only to cure. Well, then, what faults have you found? for I know you would not pardon me any."

"I love you too much, to flatter you," said he, "and had you loved the Sisters as well, you would not have taken pleasure in flattering, instead of edifying them: you have praised their situation instead of teaching them some humility and salutary lessons. As with the food of the body so it happens with that of the soul; a flattering speech is windy, and like flatulent vegetables, it is hollow and unsubstantial. In preaching we must not place before our

hearers a food void of nourishment, and the taste whereof passes immediately away, but such that is nutritious, and will nourish unto life eternal. In fact, we should never enter a pulpit without having before fixed in our mind to raise one particular stone of the mystical Jerusalem, teaching the practice of some virtue, or the abhorrence of some sin; for the fruit of all preaching is to weed out sin and to plant virtue. *O Lord*, says David, *I will teach the unjust thy ways: and the wicked shall be converted unto thee*" (Ps. 4. 15)."

"But" I answered, "what sort of conversion should I preach to those religious, free as they are from all their enemies, the world, the devil and the flesh, and serving God in holiness?"

"They should be taught to be on their guard lest they fall, whilst they are on their feet; to work out their salvation as the Holy Ghost teaches them, in fear and trembling, and not to be without some apprehension even as regards the sins that have been pardoned. You have spoken of them as if they were saints; it is very easy for you thus to canonize living people. But there is no need thus to pillow their elbows, or to give milk to such as are in need of bitters and absinthe."

"I did it," I said, "in order to encourage and to strengthen them in their holy purposes."

"But you should give courage without exposing one to the danger of presumption and vanity. It is always far more preferable to keep the audience humble than to lead them over heights, and to place before them wonderful things above their abilities. I am confident on another occasion you will certainly be more on your guard."

VIII.—ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

On the following day he requested me to preach before

the Sisters of St. Clara. He was present; and the concourse of people was as large as on the previous occasion. I was very careful to keep clear of the rock he had pointed to me. I went through my sermon with great simplicity of language and thought, aiming at nought but the edification of my hearers. I advanced in perfect order, and kept strictly to my subject. After we had returned home, he came to my room, which was his own—for he always gave his own room up to me when I visited him.* Embracing me with affection, he said, "Indeed I loved you yesterday, but I love you more to-day. In truth, you are after my heart; and, if I am not mistaken, you are also after God's own; and I think He has accepted your sacrifice. I did not give you so much credit for compliance and condescension. But it is written *An obedient man shall speak of victory* (Prov. xxi. 28), and you have to-day conquered yourself. Do you know what most of your hearers said? that, days follow each other, but are not alike, and that some were not so well pleased as yesterday, and that those who were not satisfied yesterday were amazingly pleased to-day.

"I now impart to you a general jubilee for all your past faults. To-day you have acted entirely according to my wishes, and if you continue thus, you will do good service for the Master of the vineyard. Preaching should not be based on the words and thoughts of human wisdom, but on the manifestation of spirit and truth. Follow this system faithfully, and God will honor your work and finish it; you will be prudent in the mystic word, and will possess the science of the saints, and that science which makes the saints. What else should we wish to possess, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified?"

* It was the custom of those two devoted friends to visit each other alternately every year; their dioceses were contiguous.

IX.—HOW HE ABHORRED BEING PRAISED.

As St. Gregory puts it in reference to the wise man, praises offered to our Blessed Saint were "a thorn to his ear and a torture to his mind;" whereas he would fall upon the neck of such who forgot themselves so far as to offend him.

Once the Bishop of Saluzzo made the following pun—*Tu* SAL ES, *ego vero neque sal neque lux*—and, somehow, the joke occurred to my mind as I was preaching before him, in Annecy, and remarked that he was the salt (*sal es*), wherewith the people of his diocese were seasoned. But I paid dearly for it. As we returned home, "you were going a fine gait," said he, "you were running so smoothly, what made you cut that prank? It marred the whole thing, and came well nigh destroying all the merit of your sermon. Was it not like adulterating the pure gold of God's word by mixing up with it the sayings of man? Is it not written *Praise not any man before death?* (Eccl. xi. 30). A fine salt, indeed, I am! that has lost all its savor, spoilt, good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trod on by men. Oh that so much good harvest should have been destroyed with a handful of cockle! Verily, if you meant that to confuse me, you have gained your point."

X.—HIS HUMILITY.

It was a source of frequent confusion and deep humiliation to Blessed Francis, to hear expressions or see actions which bespoke the opinion in which he was held as a saintly man and a faithful servant of God. It was not his wont to speak disparagingly of himself, for he held words of self-humiliation a rock against which humility will certainly split. It was remarkable how, in his conversation, he avoided any allusion that might be directly or indirectly

applied to himself. It was a saying of his that it was as dangerous for one to speak of himself as to walk on a rope, unless one be well armed with balance-weight, that he may not lose his balance, and with an extraordinary circumspection prevent a mishap.

"Now," he would say, "those good people with their praises and fine words are only offering me very bitter fruits of their friendship. They will only keep me longer in Purgatory, for if they think so well of me, they will not pray rest to my soul. That's all that comes of my having a good reputation! I would rather feast my eyes on the fruits of good works and enjoy the oil of mercy, than to see the fluttering of so many leaves of vain praises. One ounce of work is worth hundred pounds of talk. What is it all, but *smoke?** Sweet *benedictions*, indeed, which are followed by *derelictions*.

XI.—ABOUT PRECOCIOUS WRITERS.

I began to write when quite young, and went into print too early. I once complained with the Saint of my rashness, and he replied that there might be two different opinions on this point, and both founded on good reasons.

He said, "We should be slow to write, but ready to speak, and this is the most common opinion. A certain religious priest and preacher had once composed a book which he wished to publish. He took it to his superior for revision and permission. The latter promised that he would read the work and give his opinion, but at the same time he remarked, 'Dear father, have you nothing more to

* This is a poor translation of text, which plays on words, *i. e.*: On parle de *l'eau bénite de cour* (empty promises) et j'appelle ceci de l'eau bénite du monde. How would you render it?—Let it be remarked here, once for all, that French scholars look upon Mgr. Camus' diction as very choice and difficult.

learn?' and with those words he dismissed him. This was tantamount to say that it is not whilst we are studying that we should write books, but after having studied a great deal."

He was wont to say that "fruits of this kind ripen only at an advanced season, late in the fall. As for the fruits of preaching, they are pleasing in their green foliage, and in the ardor of summer-heat—lead in writing and quicksilver in preaching.

"On the other hand," he continued, "some hold that it is better to write early, inasmuch as one will have a chance to correct himself in subsequent editions. Should the breeze prove too strong, one has time to put back. And again, such as write in early life enjoy the fruit of their labors like those who have planted trees in their youth.

"In truth the former opinion is rather severe, whereas the latter is encouraging. Yet neither amounts to a great deal when we aim to God alone in our works. Those who remand the publication of their writings beyond the grave, that they may not be tempted with vanity do well, provided this is their true motive; but were they to act so, to avoid the annoyance of criticisms and censures indeed they fly from one kind of vanity into the snares of another.

"Moderation is the crowning jewel of every thing, and, thus, to write at an age neither too young nor too old, is very wise for those who have received a talent for it, as there is still time to mend; to neglect this talent when God has given it will be a matter to be settled at the judgment; but to fear the opinion of people and their criticism, is just like refusing to travel in summer because there are flies on the road."

XI.—REMEMBER THE DEPARTED.

When any of his friends or acquaintances died he never

tired of speaking of their virtues, and earnestly begging prayers in their behalf. He would say, "*We do not think enough of the departed, of our dear dead*, because if we did, we would speak more frequently of them. We turn away from the subject as a mournful one; we literally let the dead bury the dead, their memory dies away in our heart with the last sound of the funeral bell, and we do not reflect that it cannot be a true friendship which does not survive the grave, it being the verdict of holy writ that love is as strong as death (Cant. viii. 6)."

"No suspicion of flattery can be attached to words of praise bestowed on one after his death. It would be akin to impiety to attack the good name of the dead; a savage act, something like the wild beasts which tear up the grave to devour its tenant. At the same time it is an act of feeling piety to dilate on their good deeds, thereby encouraging ourselves to emulate their virtues."

He was even wont to say that in this one act all the thirteen works of mercy might be recognized. "For," said he, "is it not like visiting the sick when we engage the prayers of the faithful in behalf of the souls in purgatory? —And so it is like giving drink to those who are thirsty, when we draw the dew of blessed prayers on those who are burning with the desire of serving God, and are suffering in those flames. Is it not as if we gave food to the hungry, when we help their deliverance through those means which faith places within our reach? And are we not purchasing the ransom of prisoners? Do we not clothe the naked, when we help them to seek the garments of light in eternal glory? Can there be a nobler hospitality than to hasten their admittance into the celestial Jerusalem, and to make them the fellow-citizens of saints and assistants at the throne of God in the eternal Sion? Is it not by far a more opportune service to introduce souls into heaven, than to bury the dead, and consign them to mother earth?

"Again: why can't we compare the merit of working in behalf of departed souls with that of the works of spiritual mercy, giving counsel to the simple, correcting the erring, teaching the ignorant, pardoning offences, patiently bearing injuries? Lastly, what comparison can there exist between affording consolation to those who are in affliction in this life, and that exceedingly great comfort which is afforded to the poor souls, that are suffering in such terrible durance in purgatory?"

XIII.—ABOUT THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

St. Charles Borromeo always read the Bible on his knees as if he were receiving its sacred words on the summit of Sinai, amid the thunder and lightning surrounding God's presence. And thus our Saint would never allow that Holy Writ should be quoted in public, and in writings, or made the subject of private study, but with marks of most profound reverence. He would not allow an orator to launch at once into the mystical sense of the Word, without a previous exposition of the literal one; else, he would say, we might as well roof a house before we build its foundation. The Word of God should be treated with more reverence and steadiness. It is not like a piece of cloth that we can cut and shape into whatever fashion we chose. "Expound the true sense of the letter, and then draw what moral you think fit, and make your application to practical cases," he would say: "but employ the utmost care lest your application should appear far-fetched and not spontaneous." Were not this exquisite diligence employed, he condemned the figurative scope as a "disfigured figure," and compared such efforts to a chime of bells out of which we can play many tunes.

He gave a proof of how very particular he was in this matter, on the occasion of my quoting the words of Psalm

xvii. *With the holy thou wilt be holy, à propos* of bad companies. He was present at my sermon, and I perceived at once that he was not pleased with the application. And so when we were alone, he called me to an account for having given the text a twist, when I knew it was not its literal sense. "By an allusion," said I. "I know it well," he answered, "but you should have told us that it was not the literal sense, for the literal sense refers it to God, who is good, which means He is merciful to those who are good; and bad, which means He is severe to those who are bad—punishing the latter and rewarding the former."

It is indeed remarkable that one so indulgent to all in everything, should be so severe in the matter of quoting the Holy Scriptures.

XIV.—ON ZEAL.

Zeal was a suspicious virtue in our Saint's estimation, "for," he would say, "its acts were like bezoars, of every hundred of which hardly one will drive away the poisonous infection. Good husbandmen say that rearing peacocks on a farm is more destructive than profitable: it is true they destroy spiders, mice, caterpillars and other vermin, but at the same time they derange the roofs of houses, frighten pigeons away, and fight all kinds of poultry. Thus zeal is always impetuous, and although it endeavours by its appeals to destroy vice, it gives rise to many disorders, if it is not ruled by moderation and prudence.

"One kind of zeal is harsh and ferocious, and gives no quarter; it magnifies even the smallest errors, and acts like an unskilful physician who aggravates the sick man's disease.

"Another kind is so relaxed and cowardly as to pardon everything, mistaking itself for that charity, which endures and suffers everything, it is true, but not an offence against God, his honour and his glory.

"But true zeal, supported by wisdom and judgment, follows this principle, *inter utrumque vola; medio tutissimus ibis* (i.e. fly between the two; keep the middle and you'll walk in safety). Hence it will pardon certain things, or at least overlook them, until the proper time to correct them arrives; and it will reprimand promptly when it perceives there is a hope of amendment. It does not let that pass by which it thinks it will preserve or promote the glory of God.

"A sweet and amiable zeal is far more efficacious than that which is harsh and passionate. Hence it is that 'Isaiah wishing to show the Messiah's power to bring the universe under the power of his easy yoke, does not call Him the 'Lion of Judah,' but the 'Lamb, the ruler of the land.' *Mildness is come upon us: and we shall be corrected*, says the Prophet." (Ps. lxxxix. 10.)

XV.—ABOUT THAT WAY OF PREACHING WHICH IS LUXURIANT IN LEAVES, BUT BARREN OF FRUIT.

In the year 1610, I was appointed to preach the Lent before the senate, in Chambery, capital of the province. I had been consecrated Bishop (by our Blessed Father) only six months before. I was then in the greenness of my youth, and my memory was overflowing with what I had learned in the schools, especially in the department of belles-lettres, which have always formed a favourite part of my studies. Hence I gave of the abundance of what I knew, and copiously drew on the stores of my memory, displaying a wonderful amount of ancient and modern lore, such as may be seen in my *Varieties*, which were the first efforts, or, what might be called flights, of my mind.

They reported to the blessed man, who lived in Annecy, at a distance of seven leagues, that my sermons contained naught but flowers and perfumes, which attracted a large

concourse of people of all grades, like bees drawn to sweet plants. But he, who was of a far different mind, and very expert in the act of preaching, wished me to possess more of the divine and less of human emotion, and more of that efficacy which is derived from a spirit of piety, rather than spirited and witty expressions which constitute the persuasiveness of human wisdom. Accordingly he wrote me a beautiful letter, and informed me that the sweet scent of my aromas were wafted over to his own atmosphere; and he compared himself to Alexander, who, furrowing the sea towards the Fortunate Islands, felt a presentiment of their nearness by the sweet odours, which the wind, kissing the smooth waters, carried as far as his vessels. But so far the prelate only showed the polished and enamelled handle of his lancet, but he greatly fleshed the blade, by remarking that, after so many messages, daily conveying to him the news that our bed was laid amidst flowers, and our furniture beautifully inlaid with cypress and cedar, and our vineyards in full blossom spreading all around a delicious perfume, and our gardens covered with an enchanting profusion of flowers, and our spring a perennial smile on every side, he was anxious to receive news of the state of the summer and of the autumn, of the harvest and of the vintage. "I listen," he continued, "to hear *a flores fructus parturiant*, whether the blossoms bear fruits. Above all be very prompt in pruning away the superfluous branches of belles-lettres; *tempus putationis advenit*, it is time to use the pruning knife, to cut off, and cast away so many strange ornaments. It was praiseworthy, indeed, to employ Egyptian vessels in the service of the tabernacle, but it should be done with a sparing hand. Rachel, it is true, was a very agreeable woman, but not so fertile as Lia; the explanation of the gospel must be in keeping with its style and simplicity: that neither rouge nor vermillion

became the cheeks of such a matron as divinity; and that it was of far more importance to guard against counterfeiting the Word of God than public money"—and so on —a wonderful profusion of admirable lessons, which had the salutary effect of rendering me a great deal more reserved, more sparing of a food which was hollow and light, and more earnest in preparing *that* which does not perish, and of the preparation whereof the scriptures speak unto us so beautifully.

XVI.—HIS RESIGNATION.

While the former Bishop of Geneva was endeavoring to have Francis De Sales appointed his coadjutor, the blessed man fell sick, even to the point of death. On being apprized of his danger his countenance beamed with joy as if the heavens were opened above him. Perfectly indifferent to life or death, he only repeated, "I belong to God; let it be done unto me according to his divine will!" Some one suggested to him that he should wish to live, if not for the service of God, at least for the purpose of doing penance. He then said:

"The fact is, that sooner or later we must die; and at whatever time this may happen, we shall stand greatly in need of God's mercy. We may as well fall in the hands of his clemency to-day as to-morrow. He is ever the same, full of goodness, and rich in mercy towards all who invoke him, while we are always bad. Who finishes his course the sooner, the less has he to account for. I know they wish to load me with a burden not a whit less frightful than death itself, and were it left to my choice, it would not take me long to make up my mind; better, however, to leave it all in the hands of Providence; far better to sleep on the bosom of Christ than to wake anywhere else. God loves us, and he knows far better than ourselves what is

good for us; *whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord* (*a*); He has *the keys of death and of hell* (*b*); *none that wait on the Lord shall be confounded* (*c*); *let us also go, that we may die with him*" (*d*).

Then some one said that it was a pity he should die so young—he was only thirty-five years old. To which he replied, "Our Lord died even younger. The number of our days is before him. He knows how to gather his flowers at the proper season. Let us not busy ourselves with so many considerations; let us look at nought but his divine will. Let that be our star, it will lead us to Jesus Christ, whether it be at the Cradle or on Golgotha. Whoever follow Him shall not walk in darkness, but will enjoy the light of life eternal, which can never be subject to death."

XVII.—BLESSED FRANCIS' LOVE OF POVERTY.

We are taught by Holy Writ that it is a great wealth that of Godliness, always contented with a sufficiency. And thus our prelate was perfectly satisfied with what had been left to him of his episcopal revenues.

He would say, "Is it not a good deal to have been left twelve hundred dollars of revenue? are they not handsome leavings? Indeed, the Apostles, who were far better Bishops than we, had not so much. Indeed, we do not deserve that God should employ us at our own rate of payment. Would to God that we were deprived even of this remnant; for had the Catholic church as much freedom in Geneva as she has in Rochelle, and had we a small chapel in the former place even as we have in the latter, rapidly would she progress. Indeed, the people are far better disposed than we think; and state reason, under cover of an imaginary liberty, reigns there far more than that of religion."

(*a* Rom. xiv. 8. (*b*) Apoc. I. 18. (*c*) Ps. xxiv. 3. (*d*) John xi. 16.

He lived in Annecy, in a spacious and handsome house which he had hired. His own apartments were elegant, but he chose for himself a sombre and narrow room, which he called 'Francis' quarters,' while the rooms where he received visitors he designated as 'the Bishop's.' This reminds me of St. Charles Borromeo, who had a small room in the garret of his palace, like that of Judith, and thither he retired to pray, and there he slept on straw, and he called it 'Charles's quarters,' while he called his drawing room the 'Cardinal's quarters.'

One day, Blessed Francis showed me a new garment they had made for him, and he wore it under his cassock. "See" said he, "my people perform little miracles; out of an old robe they have made this new garment, do they not make me look quite fashionable?"

"This miracle," I replied, "is an improvement on that of Israel's children, whose garments lasted them during the forty years' journey through the desert; whereas your folks make new clothes of old ones.

At times his steward complained that there was no money in the house, and the Saint would say, "Why to grumble about it? We better resemble our Master who did not even possess a stone on which to lay his head."

"But when can we get any?" answered the other.

"My son," replied Francis; "we must be economical."

"Indeed," quoth the steward, "it is time to be economical when there is nothing left!"

"You misunderstand me," replied the Bishop; "I mean we must pawn or sell some of our articles of furniture, that we may live; and, my friend, is not that being economical?"

I wondered one day how he could keep house with an income so meagre. "Why," said he, "it is God multiplying the five loaves."

But I insisted to know how it happened. "Bless me,"

said he, "it would not be a miracle could it be explained. Is it not great happiness to live thus by miracles? we owe it to *the mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed* (*a*).

"See; riches are really flowers, as we are told in the Gospel (*b*); they prickle with a thousand troubles those who labor to acquire them, with a great deal more uneasiness those who possess them, and with still more cares, while they are spent, while a most distressing sorrow follows their loss. On the other hand we are only administrators and rent-payers, especially when the goods belong to the Church, and are therefore the patrimony of the poor; and the difficulty lies in finding faithful dispensers. *Having food and wherewith to be covered* (*c*), what more do we need? *Quod amplius est, a malo est.* Do you wish me to be frank with you? I know perfectly well what use I make of what I have. I have barely enough to live on. Had I more, I would be at a loss how to employ it. Am I not happy living as I do, like a child without cares? *Enough is for the day the malice thereof* (*d*). The more one possesses, the greater the account he will have to render."

XVIII.—ABOUT IMPORTUNATE PEOPLE.

He held in great esteem that virtue which makes one bear cheerfully with the importunities of people. "A little amiability, moderation, and modesty," he would say, "will do all that is necessary for the practice of this virtue. When we speak of patience, you may think that its practice is required only in bearing those sufferings which give us glory. Yet, whilst we are waiting for such grand and glorious opportunities, which are seldom met with, we neglect the lesser ones; and so far are we from turning

(*a*) Lament. iii. 22. (*b*) Luke viii. 14. (*c*) I Timothy vi. 8.
(*d*) Matthew vi. 34.

into account the teasings of importunate people, that we are apt to think little of those who put up with them. We flatter ourselves that our patience will be up to the mark in the endurance of signal sorrows and insults, and meanwhile we fret at the least importunity. We feel proud to assist, nurse, and relieve our neighbors during their sickness; and, yet, we cannot endure their annoying ways, their uncouthness, their want of civility, and above all their importunities, when they call on us, in season and out of season, and at the most improper time, to entertain us with affairs, which, in our estimation, are foolish or frivolous. And thus we make an apology for our impatience, defending ourselves on the plea that our time is precious, the saving whereof, says an ancient sage, is the only laudable avarice. At the same time we are blind to the fact that we spend many hours in a thousand other things less important than the encouragement we owe to the people, and often even far less important than the very errands on which they call on us, and which we call loss of time. When we are in conversation with our neighbors we must feel pleased, and let them know that we are pleased; but when alone we should be pleased with our solitude. The evil consists in the unevenness of our disposition, whereby we always look backward, and so when in company with others we wish we were alone, and when alone we wish we were in company, whereof we should ever rejoice at our solitude. We should have a more just and more rational mind; when we are in recreation we should aim only at recreating ourselves; and we should pay the same undivided attention to recreation, and praying, and working, at the hours allotted for those exercises; lastly, we should keep strict silence when it is enjoined upon us by rule or obedience. Then we could repeat with the prophet, *I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall be always in my*

mouth (*a*), for we truly bless and praise the Lord at all times, when we refer to him all our actions, good and indifferent, and we fly from those that are bad."

XIX.—ABOUT TEMPTATIONS.

Dogs never bark at the house folks, but at strangers. Thus the Devil never tempts those who love the temptation, and belong to him. When he troubles and attacks a heart, be sure that heart is a stranger to him: and the stronger the temptation is, the greater must needs be the worth of the tempted. For his strongest assaults he reserves for the strongest places, and for those who oppose to him the strongest resistance.

Our Saint was wont to say that if we knew how to make a good use of temptations, instead of fearing them, we would covet them, and, he almost ventured to say, court them. But as the treachery of our passions and our cowardice is well known to us by sad experience and repeated falls, hence we have reason to repeat, *Lead us not into temptation* (*b*). Then again: Let us blend this mistrust of ourselves with a great confidence in God, far more powerful to keep us from falling in, than we are weak in yielding to, temptation; and our hope will be cheered by the diminution of our falls, and we shall say in the words of the prophet, *By thy aid we shall be delivered from temptation, and with thy help, O my God! we will surmount all obstacles, that stand like a wall and a rampart against our salvation. With thy assistance we shall easily tread on the asp and the basilisk, and trample under foot the lion and the dragon.* As in strong temptations we feel the strength of our courage, and of our fidelity to God, so we thereby make great progress in virtue, and

(*a*) Psalm xxxiii 2. (*b*) Matthew vi. 13.

learn how to wield the weapons of our profession against the malice of our invisible enemies. It is then that our soul, panoplied with grace, becomes as terrible to them as an army in array of battle. There are some who deem all lost when they are annoyed by blasphemous or impious thoughts, and think themselves without faith: but in fact whilst these thoughts are unpleasant they cannot hurt, and like impetuous winds only help to sink the roots of our virtues more deeply in faith. The same is to be said as regards temptations against purity, or of any other kind."

XX.—ABOUT CELEBRATING MASS EVERY DAY.

A certain young parish priest did not say mass but on Sundays and Holidays. He was much beloved by our Saint, who contrived the following ruse to induce him to celebrate every day. He made him a present of a fine box covered with red satin, embroidered in gold and silver, and ornamented with some pearls, and as he held it in his hands, he said: "I have a favor to ask of you, and I am sure you will not refuse me, as it concerns the glory of God, which I know you feel much at heart."

"Command," replied the priest.

"Oh! no. I do not command, I only make a request, and I make it in the name and for the love of God."

The young clergyman evinced his good disposition more by silence than words, and the Saint opening the case revealed its contents, a quantity of non-consecrated hosts. "You are a priest," he said, "God has called you to this state, and moreover he has chosen you to be a pastor. It would be strange if a mechanic, or a physician, or a magistrate would not practice their profession but once or twice in the week. You have the power of celebrating every day, why not do it? Thank God, there is nothing in you to prevent it. I know your soul as thoroughly as a soul

can be known, and I see in you all that should induce you to say mass every day. Take then, this little present, and please, when at the holy altar, not to forget him who has made this request of you in the name of God."

The priest was taken aback a little, but without offering resistance to words so friendly, he laid before his bishop's judgment his interior unworthiness, his youth, his lack of self-denial, and the fear of abusing so great a mystery with a life which did not warrant a frequent use of that privilege.

"All these excuses," replied the prelate, "are so many charges against you, and I could prove it easily. But let it suffice, without any further discussion, that you have appealed to my judgment, and I tell you, and in this *I think I also have the spirit of God* (*a*), that all those reasons by which you justify your absence from the altar are the very ones which oblige you to approach it. This holy and frequent celebration will ripen your youth, check your immortification, weaken your temptations, and lighten your ways; and the more you approach the altar, the better you will learn how to approach it worthily. Again, when, as it happened to St. Bonaventure, your humility represents you unworthy of it, or you feel that through want of proper disposition you do not derive from it all the benefit you should, reflect that you are a public person, that your flock and your church require it, and the departed need it; remember, lastly, above all, that when you abstain from celebrating mass, you prevent the increase of God's glory, defraud the angels of their joy, and the blessed in heaven of a special consolation."

As the Bishop concluded, the other cried *Fiat fiat* (*b*), and never for the last thirty years has he failed to celebrate daily.

(*a*) I. Cor. vii. 12, (*b*) So be it, so be it.

XXI.—HOW GREATLY CIRCUMSPECT HE WAS WHEN WRITING OR SPEAKING TO FEMALES.

A certain bishop would not allow women, no matter of what condition in life, to enter his palace, defending himself on the example set by St. Augustine. Accordingly, he had grates built in a chapel, and that was the parlor where he received persons of the other sex. Our Saint, who was very partial to the prelate, did not pass any censure on his arrangment, he only smiled, and playfully remarked that the prelate was only half bishop, having separated himself from one half of his flock. But having heard many complaints on the subject, he promised to speak about it to the prelate. The latter defended himself on the plea of his youth, the fear of being exposed to remarks, the danger of falling into useless conversations, and supported his practice by the advices given by the ancient fathers on such matters, the good example he should set to his own priests, and a thousand like reasons.

Our blessed Saint praised his zeal and precautions; "but," said he, "without going to such extremes, there is a far easier, surer, and more convenient way, which will not be exposed to censure or comment. Never speak to women but in the presence of others, and give express orders to your attendants that they shall keep within sight when women call on you. Of course they must not be within hearing distance, for the topics of conversation will generally be such as to require secrecy, and will regard the conscience; yet let their eyes be on you, and let them witness your actions. And were you to give permission to that of your chaplains, in whose hands you have placed the trust of your conscience, to advise you when he observes anything amiss in your acts or conversation, believe it would stand you in better stead than all the grates in the world, were they of iron and bristling with prongs." This, indeed, was his

own line of conduct, and although his house was open to everybody, he never admitted a female to his audience but in the presence of others.

To the same prelate he gave another advice about corresponding with women. "Never write to women but in reply to their letters, except in cases of most urgent necessity. Never write on your own choice, unless to women above all suspicion, such as mother or sister, or those in advanced age, and even then, rarely and briefly. When we write to females it should rather be with the point of a knife than with the nib of a pen, that we may be sure not to write one superfluous word."

XXII.—HOW HE TREATED THOSE WHO HUMBLED THEMSELVES BEFORE HIM.

He was in the habit of taking at their word those who humbled themselves in his presence, even adding to what they would say, in order to procure a salutary confusion to those who employed such expressions, and to warn them against exposing themselves again, feeling pretty sure that such self-humiliating people are very unwilling that what they say were believed. Here we have two remarkable examples in point.

Shortly after I had been consecrated bishop, he required of me that which appeared to me as too high a perfection.

"But, dear father," I said once, "you forget that I am just out of the world, and I am master even before I have been a disciple. You speak to me as to one already far advanced in godliness, and capable of leading others. I have scarcely got as far as the gate."

"It is very true," he answered, "and I believe it even more than you can tell me, and probably I know as well as you all that you say. I look upon you as a man saved from the wreck, and escaping from a fire, and still smelling

of its smoke. But, after all, you are a bishop, and you must have the feelings of a father; you must heighten your courage to a high level of perfection: it is not enough for you to drink the waters of your cistern, you must give to others. God, reason, and your charge, require all this at your hands. There is no question now of looking backward, unless you wish to become a statue—*O Pastor, O Idolum!* If you trust yourself you will do nothing but if you place your trust in God, what is there that you cannot do? You will be able to do everything. God is pleased in raising his power even over our infirmity, his strength over our weakness, and to confound the things that are by those which are not. Mistrust of one's self is very good, provided it goes apace with confidence in God; and the more we advance in this latter, the more we gain of the former. A desponding humility is a false humility."

The other was the case of a religieuse, who having been elected superioress, protested against accepting, descanting on the greatness of the dignity. Whereupon the Saint took her at her word, and improving on what she had said, he continued that, "in fact, there was not much difference between a sister and a leaf (*entre fille feuille*), the sisterhood knew her insufficiency, the narrowness of her mind, how weak her judgment, how rude her manners, all her manifest imperfections, her bad example, and God had probably permitted her election that she may correct her self of her faults, or at least would strive to hide them, seeing herself made a spectacle to God, angels, and men, and become very cautious how she walked, being placed in such elevated condition. She should know that it was not to her that the care of the community was entrusted but to God, who generally made choice of the witless to confound and teach the wise, as he was pleased to save us by the folly of the cross; she should be aware that a reed

of the desert may, in the hands of Jesus Christ, become a pillar in the temple. Let her hold firmly on that helping hand, which never fails those who invoke its aid."

Learn ye from these examples to avoid such words as are prompted by false humility, and are veiled with cunning subtleness!

XXII.—ON THE BEST DISPOSITION FOR DEATH.

I asked him once what he thought would be the best preparation for death. He dryly answered, "Charity." I replied that "I was well aware that one who is not in charity is in death, and that to die to the Lord, was dying if not to the act, certainly to the habit, of charity; which virtue embraces all others, and leads them after her into the soul. But I wished to know, supposing of course the existence of charity, which are the virtues animated by charity, most opportune for that occasion."

He said, "humility and confidence," and then continued in his usual pleasant strain: "A good death-bed must have a mattress of charity, but the dying Christian must pillow his head on humility and confidence, and breathe his last in humble confidence in the mercy of God. The first of those pillows, which is humility, makes us acknowledge our misery, and makes us tremble with fear, but an affectionate fear, animated of course by charity, and begetting in us the spirit of salvation; a generous and bold humility, which both makes us feel how despicable we are and elevates us to God, and makes us lean on him alone. On this first pillow the other lies very gracefully, I mean that of confidence in God. Now, this confidence is naught else but a hope strengthened by the consideration of the infinite goodness of our celestial father, who wishes our good even more than we do. O God, I hope in thee; I shall never be confounded! Those who hope in the Lord will

change their strength, will take the wings of the eagle, and shall wing a flight that will never abate."

XXIV.—THE SAINT'S POLICY.

I remarked once to the Bishop that it appeared rather strange that being born and living in the States of the Duke of Savoy, he was never employed in affairs of state, especially as it was well known that no business could be committed to him, especially in France, that would not come to a favorable end. "For," I continued, "besides your prudence, known to all but yourself, and your skill, gentleness, and patience in negociating, the reputation of your probity and godliness is a general verdict; so that even before you open your lips everything is granted to you. It were indeed a desperate affair," I added, "that could not be brought to a conclusion in your hands. I almost think that you could achieve even that which seems impossible."

"Verily," answered he, "you go rather too far, and your rhetoric is taking a high flight. You imagine that I stand as high in the estimation of others as in yours. You look upon me through magnifying glasses; but let it all go for what it is worth. My opinion of the Duke is vastly different from yours; in his very conduct towards me I find a proof of the correctness of his judgment. I cannot believe that I possess so much skill and prudence in the management of political affairs as you suppose; and, moreover, I assure you that those very words, "prudence," "affairs," and "politics," frighten me, and my knowledge of them amounts almost to nothing."

Then he added: "I will whisper a word to you, but under reserve, and to your ear, to your own inmost heart. I have not the slightest knowledge of the art of lying, or dissimulation, or of dexterously evading questions;

and yet in these very practices consists the main spring of the management of state affairs; it is the art of arts in the hands of worldly prudence.

"Not for all the States of Savoy, France, or the whole empire would I carry a false dispatch in my bosom. I cling to the old ways of loyalty, good faith and simplicity in all things. I utter with my lips just exactly that which comes from my thoughts. I could not speak *with double heart*. I hate duplicity like death, because I know that God holds a deceitful man in abomination. Very few indeed who know me but have discovered that I am totally unfit to meddle with politics; besides, I have always worshipped, as a celestial, sovereign, and divine truth, the principle laid down by the Apostle, that *No man being a soldier to God entangleth himself with secular businesses* (*a*)."

XXV.—HIS GREAT CHARITY FOR THE DYING.

A Sister of the Visitation had been suffering from long and exquisite pains, with a patience so perfect that she was the wonder of all who visited her; she not only possessed an admirable perseverance, but was always cheerful: at last the malignity of her malady undermined all her strength, and she came to die. About two hours before her death our blessed Bishop was called to assist at her departure. He was well acquainted with her interior, and knew that she had walked with admirable patience over the path of the Cross; and therefore had not the least difficulty in preparing her for death; on the contrary, had she not been perfectly resigned to the will of God, it might have proved hard to make her check her ardent wish of meeting the Lord. She was approaching the throes of agony, but

(*a*) II Timothy ii. 4.

still enjoyed a clear mind, and made acts of faith, love contrition, humility, and conformity to the will of God, according as they were suggested to her by the good bishop, from time to time, with great calmness and gentleness, as was his wont on such occasions. Then all of a sudden, as the racking pains increased, she cried—*But would it not be very wrong?* and said no more.

The prelate fearing lest it was some temptation of the enemy, who in those straits falls with all his power upon a soul to make her his victim, replied :—"What wrong, my child?" The dying—"Eh! my father; no, it would be too great an infidelity." The blessed man began to feel the most keen apprehensions. "What infidelity, my child? Who has robbed you at this last moment of that dear confidence, which the Lord had inspired you to place in me? Alas! my sins must have done it."

"By no means, father, dear," answered she dying: "I have more confidence in you than ever; but it is not worth bothering your head."

"May be it is of more importance than you think. The spiritual malice of the tempter is far more subtle and deceitful than you imagine, especially at these straits when he sharpens his wits so keenly. I beg of you, I entreat you not to conceal your trouble from me."

"Ah! dear father, would I prove unfaithful to our Lord; this is the time that I should be submissive to him more than ever."

"My child, you cannot perform an act of more perfect submission, or more pleasing to him, than to tell me candidly, simply, and confidentially, what troubles you."

"My father, I have been often troubled so. But the hour is come, when it behoves more than ever to stifle any feeling of tenderness towards myself, and shut the door against complaints.'

"No sacrifice is above that of obedience. I dare not command in its name that you should disclose to me the cause of your anxiety; but I beg of you, my dear child, to relieve me of the anxiety in which I am, an anxiety so great that you would pity me, were you to know its intensity."

"Father, you possess too much strength of mind to let a trifle like this cause you anguish and perplexity."

"And do you call the salvation of a soul, ransomed by the death of Christ, a trifle? I am paralyzed with fear, when I see the danger in which you are, perhaps from no cause at all."

"You are right, father, it is nothing."

"Oh! how can it be called nothing, when one may be lost by it, and God may punish it with eternal pains! Alas! my good child, shall I resort to extreme remedies, in order to drive away from you this wicked demon, who ties your tongue, and makes you dumb?"

The good prelate was about calling all the nuns to pray, when the dying sister said to him, in broken and low accents: "Well, father, if you command me, in the name of holy obedience, I will tell you."

"Be it so, then. But, oh! you relieve me, you will take a mill-stone off my heart. My soul is oppressed until you afford me this relief."

"But, dear father, do you assure me it is no sin?"

"So far from it being wrong, you would commit a sin, my dear child, were you to withhold it from me after the command I have given you; believe me, upon my own soul."

"Alas! dear father, must I then turn a coward at the close of my life?"

"What do you mean? speak plainly."

"Well, is it not cowardly and unfaithful to God to say that I suffer a great deal?"

The blessed man, perceiving at once what poisoned the heart of the poor dying child, cried, in a tone of authority: "By no means; in the name of God, I say to you, my dear child, it is neither cowardly nor unfaithful. But, oh! you give me back my life! Is there anything else?"

"Nothing more, my dear father. But is it because you wish to give me courage and comfort in my distress that you tell me so emphatically that there is no sin in it?"

"By no means, my child. I hate tergiversation, especially in such matters, when one must speak from his heart of hearts. Now, dear child, I will give you an example, before which all your fears will vanish, even as darkness disappears before the sun. The Son of God, our Lord and Master, while on the cross, amid the extreme tortures of his death, cried, with a loud voice: *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?* Now, compare this with your own state of mind, and does it not appear like a flickering lamp before the sun? So far from it being sinful to complain, and even to cry under the pressure of pain, I believe we are bound by the holy virtue of truth, candor, and simplicity, in case of sickness, and, above all, when sufferings are intense, to manifest them to those who can relieve us; for how could they give us aid unless we make complaint and inform them of our pains?"

"Oh! father dear, then I have been often guilty, indeed! for I have been constantly sick these many years, and have only been a fit piece of furniture for the infirmary; I do not remember to have ever been without pain, and often have I endured them without complaining. But it is also true that, now that I feel my strength and vigor ebbing away, I suffer even more intense pains, and I feared to let it be known and to complain, lest I were guilty of too much tenderness towards myself, of cowardice, and of disloyalty towards Jesus Christ, who has suffered so much more for my sake on the cross."

She then begged of our Saint to give her his benediction, and grant her absolution for these faults. Shortly after, her mind began to waver, and after half an hour of sweet and placid agony, she breathed her last on the bosom and heart of Jesus Christ.

The blessed man, shedding tears of consolation for a death so happy, took this opportunity to explain to the sisters the heroic mortification of this holy religieuse, who amid the extreme horrors and anguish of death, dared not even open her lips, as if she said in her heart with the prophet, "I was dumb, and I opened not my mouth, because thou hast done it," *because thou hast smitten me* (*a*).

Yet the Bishop, from whose lips I have heard the above facts, acknowledged to me that he had never been in such anguish of mind, and that he left the room bathed in tears, and so wet with perspiration as if he had been preaching three hours on the passion of our Lord.

XXVI.—BREVITY IN PREACHING.

He was greatly in favour of short sermons, and often remarked that long preaching was the most common fault of the orators of his time.

"Do you, then," said I, "call that a fault, and call dearth what, in fact, is abundance?"

"When the farm," he replied, "produces a great deal of wood, it bears the least of fruit. A multitude of words does not always produce the greatest results. Read the homilies and sermons of the Fathers—how short! and yet how much more efficacious than ours! Good St. Francis has prescribed by rule that the preachers of his order should be short. Believe me, I speak from experience,

(*a*) Ps. xxxviii. 10.

and a long experience, indeed. The more you say, the less will they carry away; the less you speak, the more will they profit. By overcharging the memory of the hearers, you will demolish it, just as a lamp is put out when we pour too much oil into it; and plants become generally rotten by watering them too much. In a long sermon, the conclusion makes you forget the middle, and the middle the beginning. Preachers who are only of an average merit will become acceptable if they are short, and those who are excellent become heavy when they are too long. There is no trait so hateful in a preacher as that of being too long."

XXVII.—ABOUT SMALL AUDIENCES.

"Be always pleased," he was wont to say, "when appearing on the pulpit you see few people, and that your audience is like a clear coast before you" (*à claire-voie*).

"But," I replied, "it costs no more to teach many than a few."

"I speak from an experience of thirty years. I have invariably witnessed more good done in the service of God by those sermons I have preached before small audiences than before numerous ones. When I was provost of the cathedral, my predecessor sent me on a missionary expedition with other priests. On a Sunday, the weather being very stormy, only seven persons were in the church, and some one remarked that it was not worth while to preach. I replied, that I neither felt encouraged by large audiences, nor discouraged by small ones; and provided some one was edified it was all I wished. Accordingly I ascended the pulpit, and I remember my sermon was on the prayer of the saints. I handled the subject with great simplicity, and said nothing either pathetic or vehement; yet one of my hearers began to weep bitterly, and even

sobbed loudly. I thought something ailed him, and I begged of the rest to assist him, and even told him that I would stop preaching and do for him what I could. He replied that he felt perfectly well in body, and begged of me to continue, because I dressed the very wound of his heart. The sermon, a very short one, was over; he threw himself at my feet, and loudly cried:—'My father, you have given me life, this day you have saved my soul. O! blessed be the hour I came, and in which I have listened to your words! This hour is worth an eternity to me.' Then he told me how he had had a conversation with some ministers on the prayer of the Saints, and it had been represented to him as a horrible idolatry, and on the following Thursday he was to abjure the Catholic Church. But the sermon he had just heard had cleared all his doubts, his mind was enlightened, and he detested from his heart the promise he had made, and from that moment he renewed his attachment to the Catholic Church. I cannot tell you what an impression this little incident, which had happened before only a few people, made in the country all around. The people became better disposed, and far more willing to listen to the Word of Life. I might quote other, and even more remarkable cases, which have inspired me with a great partiality for small audiences, so much so that I am never so well pleased in ascending a pulpit, as when I see only a few people around me."

PART THIRD.

I.—WHAT TO AIM AT IN PREACHING.

It was not enough, in our Saint's opinion, that a preacher should aim at doing good in a general way, but he should always have some particular point in view; as, for instance, the knowledge of a truth, the clearing up of some doubt, the destruction of a vice, or the practice of a virtue.

"You have no idea," said he once, "how important this advice is, and how many sermons, otherwise carefully and elaborately prepared, are useless for the want of this rule. Follow this rule, and your preaching will be always fruitful: else, you may be admired, but you will do no good."

When some preacher was praised in his presence, he would ask, "In what virtue does he excel? in humility, in devotion, in kindness, in boldness, in mortification, or in what?" And if he was told that he was much admired as a preacher, he would say, "All this is talk, but not work. The former is much easier than the latter. How many there are who talk but do not act, and by their example demolish what they have built with their preaching! Is not he a monster who has a tongue longer than his arm?"

Once he was told of a popular preacher that "he had that day achieved wonders." "Is he the man *that is found without blemish, and that hath not gone after gold, nor put his trust in money, nor in treasures* (*a*)?" was his remark thereupon. Of another he was told that he had even surpassed himself; and he answered:—"What

(*a*) Ecclesiastes, xxxi. 8.

sacrifice of self has he made? Has he put up with any injury? It is by such that one surpasses himself. And do you wish to know," he continued, "by what signs I recognize the excellence and the worth of a preacher? By the people striking their breasts after the sermon is over, and saying to themselves, 'I'll do better,' not by exclaiming, 'O! how well he has spoken! what a beautiful sermon!' Just so: because to say fine things, and with eloquence, only shows the learning and eloquence of a man. But when sinners are converted, and mend their bad ways, then it is God that has spoken through the lips of a preacher, who possesses the true wisdom of the Word, and that of the Saints. The true fruit of preaching is the abolition of sin, and to make justice reign over the world. It is for this purpose that God sends his preachers, as Jesus sent his Apostles, that they might bring forth fruits, and their fruits may last."

II.—DIGNITIES ARE DANGEROUS.

It was once remarked, within hearing of our Blessed man, that a certain Prelate, holding a high rank in the Church, was fast approaching the dignity of Cardinal, but meanwhile his absence from his diocese caused inconvenience.

"Would he were already a Cardinal!" said the blessed Francis. I asked him "Why?" "Because he would think of something better." "What, perhaps, of the Papacy? but then, who would absolve him of that sin?" "I do not mean that; but of the care of souls, which is the art of all arts, in the exercise whereof far greater service can be rendered to the Lord." "And will not that dignity hinder him from doing so?"

"Not at all, inasmuch as St. Charles Borromeo, even in these our days, has so worthily done it. But I wish to say that, having got over the anxiety of securing the post, he

will fall back on his own heart, and he will think of those pastoral duties which a right divine binds us to, and will discharge them with great assiduousness and without distraction, and this will cause great edification."

As for that prelate, just when he thought there was the least chance of attaining the honor, which he had coveted so long, he reached it almost suddenly by a singular play of Divine Providence, when all the resources of human prudence had been entirely played out. But as he got possession of his dignity, it was a matter of wonder how little he seemed to think of that which he had held in so much value, and how much more value and importance he attached to his episcopal charge, which he had before seemingly neglected. He had made his arrangments to reside in his diocese, to which he promised himself he would now devote all his cares, and do a great deal of good; and certainly he was a man of extraordinary gifts. But God was pleased with his good will, and called him hence after he had enjoyed only six months, and that with little ease, his new dignity, for the attainment whereof he had anxiously struggled for more than thirty years. A remarkable example, and well worthy of consideration.

III.—INGENIOUSNESS OF HIS CHARITY.

A certain individual borrowed twelve dollars of our Saint, and wished to leave his note for it, in spite of the prelate, who not only did not ask for it, but actually refused it; however, the promissory note was given, bearing only one month's time, according as the promiser himself preferred to have it. The month was extended to a whole year, at the end of which time the man called again, and without the least allusion to the former loan, asked for ten dollars. The Saint wished him to wait in the drawing-room, and having gone and obtained the note, said to the man: "You have

asked me the loan of only ten dollars, here I give you twelve, with all my heart," and returned him the promissory note.

Another man asked him the loan of twenty dollars, and wished to give him a note. It was not often that the blessed man had so much money by him; yet, as his was so good a heart, and he would allow himself to be torn to pieces to oblige his neighbors, he thought of an expedient which would relieve the individual, and bring the Prelate's liberality within range of his own means. Thus he went in quest of ten dollars, and returning, he said to the man: "I have found a way by which each of us can this day gain ten dollars, believe me." "My lord, how can it be done?" "You and I have only to open our hands, and that is very easily done. Here, take these ten dollars, which I give you as a present, in place of lending you twenty; you will thereby gain those ten, and I will look upon ten more as gained, provided you will free me from the obligation of lending them."

IV.—HE STOPS A COMPLAINT BY THE BISHOP OF BELLEY.

I had been wantonly wronged, and I complained of it to the blessed man. The fact was so manifest that he took my part. Thus encouraged, I felt elated, and spared no words to exaggerate the justice of my case. The good prelate, to stem the current of my conversation, remarked: "There is no doubt that their conduct in treating you thus cannot be excused, on any ground whatever; it is very unbecoming, especially towards a man of your station in life. Only one circumstance in the whole affair is to your disadvantage." "And what?" said I. "Only that it is for you to be the wiser of the two, and keep silent."

I was taken completely aback by the remark, and felt at a loss how to make any reply whatever.

V.—ABOUT FREQUENT PREACHING.

A charge was laid against me because I preached in Lent, Advent, Sundays, and all festivals; to which he replied, that to blame a workman or the keeper of a vineyard because he tilled his land well was only praising them. He spoke to me about it, from fear that I might be discouraged in my work, and said: "I have had the best of fathers, but he spent a large portion of his life at court and in wars. When I was provost, I gave myself to preaching most assiduously, both at the Cathedral and in every parish, even before the smallest confraternities; in fact I did not know how to refuse. *Give to every one that asketh thee* (*a*). On hearing the bell summoning to the sermon, my father would ask, who is going to preach? Who? but your son. One day he takes me aside, and says to me: 'Provost, thou preachest too often; I hear the bell ringing even in working days, and it is always the cry, 'It is the provost! the provost!' It was not so in my days; there was not so much preaching, but at the same time, O! what sermons! God only knows how learned, and well prepared they were; they were wonderful; there was more quoting of Greek and Latin in one sermon than in ten of thine; everybody was enraptured and edified; the concourse was immense; you would have thought that people went a-gathering the manna; but thou hast rendered the practice so common that people do not attach much importance to it, and thou hast even lost in public opinion.' Don't you see my good father spoke just as he understood the case in his own way? You can judge whether it was from any wrong motive he spoke thus, but he spoke even according to the world's views. Believe me, there cannot be too much preaching, *Nunquam satis dicitur, quod nunquam satis discitur,*

(*a*) Luke vi. 30.

especially in this country bordering on the land of heresy, and an heresy which is fostered and kept alive by much preaching, and will not be checked but by holy predications."

VI.—ABOUT UNINTELLIGIBLE WRITERS.

He once saw in my library the published volumes of a writer, a great scholar indeed, albeit he was so obscure that even most learned men could not enjoy his productions. Some wag had written on the fly-page *Fiat Lux.* The Prelate found the joke much to the point, and endeavoring for a while to taste a morsel of that dry and hard biscuit, but in vain, he remarked: "This man has given volumes to the public, but I cannot see that he has brought any of them to light. It is a great pity that one should be so learned and did not possess the faculty of expressing his own ideas; an average talent, and an easy way of expressing one's thoughts, is far more preferable."

VII.—ABOUT THAT BOOK CALLED THE "SPIRITUAL COMBAT."

Those words of Thomas à Kempis, the reputed author of *The Imitation of Christ*, to wit, "I have sought rest in all things, and never got it but in little corners and little books," were highly appreciated by our Saint; he improved on them by saying that to study well, it was necessary to read only one book, and those who skip over many scarcely ever profit by their readings. Accordingly, he advised every one to have a favorite book; if possible, it should be small, and easily carried about; it should be read often, and its teachings carefully applied to practice. *The Spiritual Combat* was a book dear to him, a favorite one. Often has he told me that he had carried it in his pocket for eighteen years, and every day read a chapter, or one page

at least, of it. He suggested the perusal of this work to all who applied to him for advice, qualifying it as very entertaining, and its counsels practicable. For my part, the more I read it the more I discover in it, as if in germ, the spiritual doctrines followed and taught by our Saint.

VIII.—A GRACEFUL REBUKE.

Some ladies of distinction called on him in Paris just as he had descended from the pulpit. Every one had a question to put to him, or wished the solution of a difficulty, each proposing a different one, and all at once. The good man was at a loss how to reply to them all, and with great amiability remarked: "I will answer all your questions, provided you will reply to one of mine. In a company where all speak, and none listens, pray, can you tell me what is said?" The ladies were greatly embarrassed, and became dumb, not unlike a thousand frogs that will suddenly stop their croaking when a stone is thrown into the midst of them.

IX.—ABOUT A PREACHER WHO SPOKE AGAINST THE ABSENT.

A certain very learned orator, who took great pains with his sermons, but was not favored with large audiences, spent a goodly portion of an hour in complaining of those who did not go to hear the Word of God, and went so far as to threaten to give it up, and leave the pulpit. The Blessed Francis had heard the sermon, and on coming away from the church said to a friend: "Against whom is the good man so angry? He has been scolding us for a fault which we are not guilty of; for we were all present. Did he wish to cut us in pieces that we might fill the vacant places? He was put out with the absent, who after all

will not improve, as they did not hear him. If he was anxious to address them he should have gone through the streets, and about the squares of the city, to press the loiterers into his banquet. He has punished the innocent instead of the guilty."

X.—ABOUT SMALL ACTS OF VIRTUE.

Whilst he was certainly in possession of the most eminent virtues, he had a tender love for those also which are deemed small in the opinion of men: whereas, he held that no virtue is small in the eyes of God. He would say: "All wish to possess those grave virtues which attract attention, are stuck high up on the cross, and are therefore seen from afar, and will be admired. But few are diligent in gathering those, which, like humble thyme, grow at the foot, and under the shadow of that Tree of Life. And yet they spread the sweetest scent, and are more than others bedewed with the blood of our Saviour, whose first lesson to the Christians was, *Learn ye of me who am meek and humble of heart* (*a*). It does not fall to the lot of every one to practice those grand virtues of energy, magnanimity, magnificence, martyrdom, patience, perseverance, and noble valor. Occasions for such acts occur but rarely; and yet all the world aspires to them, because they are dazzling, and have a great name. It often happens that people imagine themselves equal to the performance; their bravery becomes inflated with this vain opinion of self, and when the occasion is offered, down they come with an inglorious fall. It is not every day that an opportunity is offered to make great gains, but every day one can earn or save a penny or a farthing; and by managing the small profits, in the long run people often become very rich.

(*a*) Matthew, xi. 29.

We would lay up immense spiritual riches, and a large treasure in heaven, were we diligent in employing in the service of the holy love of God all the minute opportunities which offer themselves at every moment. Acts of grand virtues will avail nothing unless they are practised with great charity; for it is charity that lays the foundation, gives weight and price and value, before God, to good works. The act of a small virtue (for not all virtues are by their nature equal in greatness), performed with a great love of God, is far more excellent than the act of a virtue which may be more exquisite, and still performed with less love of God. One glass of cool water given for the love of God will merit life eternal. Two small coins of little value, given with that same love by a poor widow, are preferred by Jesus Christ himself to the rich presents poured in by the wealthy of the land. We generally do not set a proper value on a little patience with annoyances from our neighbors, an amiable forbearance of their imperfections, a modest endurance of a malicious look, the love of insult and of one's humiliation, or of a slight injustice, willingness to have others preferred to us, a scolding or an importunity, or a performance of services below our condition in life, a pleasant reply to those who rebuke us wrongfully or with asperity, on a fall, and being therefore laughed at, on receiving a refusal with grace and good humor, on a proper rendition of thanks for favors received, on the treatment of servants with humility and kindness: which things appear as very small to those who have a proud heart and carry a high head. We only wish for such virtues as are brave and gorgeous, and give renown; we do not consider that those who strive at pleasing men are not servants of God, and that the world's friendship renders one an enemy to God."

XI.—THE POWER OF GENTLENESS.

I have often wondered at that incomparable sweetness with which Blessed Francis could manage everything according to his own pleasure, without the least violence: his suavity of manners had a power which none could withstand. All yielded to his entreaties; he gained his ends sweetly and strongly; You might say that at his touch all obstacles dwindled away. A Prelate of much wisdom and piety, to whom I expressed these sentiments, replied very justly, that "It was even this sweetness which rendered him so powerful. You know that steel is stronger than iron, and yet has a softer temper. *Blessed are the meek for they shall possess the land* (*a*): the will of every one is in their hand; they become the kings of hearts, and every one runs after the odor of their ointment."

It was one of the sublime and grand maxims of our Saint, that, *Blessed are yielding hearts, because they will never break;* no, they will not break, because everything else will break before them.

XII.—ABOUT THE FEAR OF CHASTITY, AND THE CHASTITY OF FEAR.

Blessed Francis often said that it is one of the good marks of chastity to be fearful; fear is its fortress and its ramparts. We might well apply to this truth those words, *Blessed is the man who is always fearful* (*b*). St. Jerome says that "Christians have no more fierce combats than those for chastity, and common as they are, victory is rarely their gain; and he who grows confident on his former chastity is in the greatest danger to fall." Now, if whilst fear is necessary to chastity, we have no less need of the chastity of fear; in order to work out our salvation with

(*a*) Matthew, v. 4. (*b*) Proverbs, xxviii. 14.

fear and trembling. I asked what he meant by *chastity of fear*. "That chaste fear which is called holy by the prophet, and whose abode is in eternity, is begotten by the love of God, and is inspired by that charity which makes us feel the interests of God at heart more than our own, and accordingly we fear the offence more than the punishment thereof. When we fear to offend God because he is goodness itself, and not because he holds vengeance in his hands, then our fear is chaste and pure, and very much like the faithful woman who fears nothing so much as giving an offence to her spouse because she loves him, and her greatest happiness is to be loved by him. In a word, chaste and pure is that fear which is the offspring of reverence, love, and respect, in no way servile or mercenary, but filial, and proper only of Saints. It is not that a servile fear will prevent charity from entering a soul; on the contrary it prepares the way for it; it acts like the needle, St. Augustine says, which carries the thread with it; but not so with that servile fear which makes one abstain from sin only through the fear of punishment, so that if there was no punishment one would willingly sin. They are two very distinct things to say, 'I do not sin because I fear its penalty,' and 'I do not sin *only* because there is a penalty following the commission of sin.' The former is righteous, the latter is impious, because it amounts to saying, 'Why should I hesitate to offend God, provided there was not a punishment to fear?'"

Blessed Francis always praised very highly that fear which springs from love, it is a filial fear; and it was a favorite saying of his, *We must fear God from love, and not love him from fear.*

XIII.—HE NEVER LOST HOPE OF SINNERS.

His goodness of heart was so great that he never thought

ill even of bad persons. He always contrived to cover the faults of others, drawing his arguments from the infirmity of human nature, the violence of temptations, and from the great number of those who fall in the same sins. When the faults were public, and so manifest that they could not be palliated, he would draw his resources from the future, and would say:

'Who knows but he will be converted? and who are we that we judge our brother? Were it not for the grace of God that sustains us, we would do worse, and would perhaps be already inmates of hell. There are twenty-four hours in a day, and there is enough misery in every one of them. The greatest of sinners often becomes the greatest penitent, such as David, and many others; and their penitence builds more than their sin had destroyed. God can make children of Abraham arise from stones. Wonderful are the transformations created by his right hand, and he changes vessels of infamy into vessels of honor."

He would not allow that the conversion of sinners should ever be despaired of even at the last breath; averring, that this life is the road of our pilgrimage, and those who stand may fall, whilst those who have fallen may have grace to be on their feet again. He went farther: even after one's death he could not bear that judgment were passed on those who had led a bad life, except on such as were known to be lost from the testimony of the Scriptures. Except in those cases, no man should dare to pry into that secret which God had reserved to his own wisdom and power. His reason for this was that "as the first grace did not fall under merit, so the last one, which is the final perseverance, was none the more given to merit." Now, *who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor* (a) *?*

(a) Romans, xi. 34.

For this reason, even after the last breath was drawn, he wished that we should think well of the dead, no matter how hideous a death we may have witnessed; for after all, we based our judgment only on exterior conjectures, which may lead even the ablest minds into error.

Apropos of this, he narrated the following: "A preacher, a kind-hearted man, speaking once of that heresiarch who had raised the standard of rebellion in Geneva, said that we should never form a judgment of damnation after one's death—unless in the case of rèprobates, so stated in the Scriptures—not even on that heresiarch who, by his errors, has been the cause of so many evils. 'For,' said he, 'who knows but God may have touched his heart at the last moment, and he died a convert? True it is,' he continued, 'that out of the Church, and without true faith there is no salvation; but who can tell whether he has not earnestly wished for a reunion with the Catholic Church, from which he had separated himself, and acknowledged in his heart the truth of the belief which he had impugned, and died sincerly repentant?' He held his audience in suspense by this train of remarks, and at last he said: 'We must certainly entertain the amplest sentiments of confidence in the goodness of God. Jesus Christ even offered his peace, his love, and his kiss to the traitor, who betrayed him with a salute on the cheek; why may he not have offered the same favor to this heresiarch? Is the arm of God shortened? Is he less good or less merciful, He who is all mercy, and merciful beyond number, measure, or limit?' Then he concluded: 'Yet, believe me, and I assure you I am not deceiving you: should he not be damned, he has had the narrowest escape man ever had; and if he was saved from this eternal wreck he should have vowed to God the handsomest candle man of his grade ever did.' This unexpected finale did not draw many tears from the audience."

XIV.—HOW HE ENCOURAGED REPENTING SINNERS.

Once a person knelt before him, and after having laid bare a life altogether unworthy of her situation in society, said to him; "Well, father, what opinion will you have of me?" "Of a saint." "But it can be only in spite of your knowledge and conscience." "It will just be according to both, and not against either of them."

"But how is that?"

"I am not so ignorant," replied the blessed man, "of what passes in the world that I should not have from time to time heard of you by certain reports. It grieved me much, both for the offence to God, and because of your fair name, which I was unable to protect; but now that I see your soul reconciled with God by true repentance, I have the means of defending you, before devil and man, and wherewith to contradict whatever evil may be spoken against you."

"But, dear father, people cannot gainsay my past life."

"It will not be so within hearing of good souls. But as for the remarks of Pharisees who will judge as even Magdalen was judged, you will have Jesus Christ for your defender

"But, yourself, what will you think of the past?"

"Nothing at all; for, besides that we are forbidden such thoughts, how can you imagine that my mind will ever dwell on that which is abolished, erased, annihilated, in a word, on what is absolutely nothing before God? How can one think of nothing, except if he did not think at all? Banish from your mind this thought of what I think; for what thoughts I shall bestow on you will praise God, and the rest of my thoughts will hold a festival in his honor: even so, I shall celebrate this joyous festival with the angels, who celebrate it high up in heaven, on this occasion of the conversion of your heart."

All this was related by the penitent to an intimate friend of hers, who had known her past life, and she added that the big tears coursed down the cheeks of the blessed Saint, and she imagined that he wept over the enormities of her life; but "No," said he, "I weep for joy at the resurrection of your soul to the life of grace."

I have often heard him praising the pleasure which St. Teresa felt, reading the life of those Saints who had formerly been great sinners, for her heart glowed with joy at the triumphs of the mercy of God over their misery.

XV.—TRUE DIFFIDENCE OF ONE'S SELF CANNOT BE POSSESSED WITHOUT AN EQUALLY TRUE CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

I asked him once how we might obtain a perfect distrust of ourselves. His answer was: "By a perfect trust in God;" and he added that "trust in God and diffidence of ourselves are like the two scales of a balance; one will rise in proportion as the other descends. The more we mistrust ourselves the more we will trust in God; the less diffidence we have in ourselves, the less confidence we feel in God; but when we have lost all confidence in ourselves, then we have gained a perfect trust in God."

"But," I replied, "can I not, by a clear knowledge of my misery and powerlessness, cast away all confidence in myself without therefor placing all my trust in God?"

"No, you cannot, provided you act from principles of charity; else that diffidence will not be of a Christian and supernatural character. Such diffidence will only beget fretfulness, despondency and cowardice; whereas a truly Christian diffidence of one's self, as founded on charity, is joyful, bold, and generous, and it prompts us to say, *Not I, but the grace of God with me* (*a*); without that grace I

(*a*) I. Cor. xv. 10; John xv. 5; II. Cor. iii. 5; Phil. iv. 13; Matth. xiv. 26.

can do nothing, I cannot even have a good thought. With it I can do all things, knowing that what is impossible for man is very easy to God, who can do whatever he lists in heaven and on earth. It was in this sense that Jesus said to his Apostles, *Have confidence, I have overcome the world* (*a* ; and the prophet says, *They that trust in the Lord* shall be *as Mount Sion:* they *shall not be moved forever* (*b*)."

XVI.—ON THE EVENNESS OF HOLY LOVE.

One of the best things I heard from our Saint's lips was, that "The truest sign that we love God in everything, is when we love him the same in all circumstances; for he being always equal to himself, the inequalities of our love towards him cannot arise but from the consideration of something which is not himself."

A sentence this which should be written over the walls of every house, and on the title-page of every book. By holding it continually before our eyes, we may follow it in the practice. It is the touchstone by which we will discover whether our charity and devotion are genuine. Had the mystical ark of our soul reached this height, then it might be said of it, as of that of Noah, that it resteth upon the high mountains, and is poised on the elevated hills of true piety. Life and death, health and sickness, poverty or riches, all would be the same to us; and all the changes and inequalities of this life would not have power enough, I will not say to capsize, but even to toss our bark, whilst we at the helm steer our course straight, leaving everything, right and left of our track, in the hands of God, who is equally amiable when he punishes as when he caresses; for Justice and Mercy are daughters of his goodness. We would then know that his hand acts, in punishing

(*a*) John xvi. 33. (*b*) Ps. cxxiv. 1.

us, like that of the physician who inflicts a wound only to cure, and as his thunder foreruns the rain, as the prophet has it, so his threats foretell those beneficial rains which God reserves for his elect, of whom it is said, *Blessed are they that mourn, because they shall be comforted* (*a*). From this firm and impregnable position the great Apostle defied all creatures, and dared them to separate him from the love of Jesus Christ.

XVII.—HOW MUCH HE ESTEEMED SIMPLICITY.

Blessed Francis having preached the Lent in Grenoble, had a desire to visit the Grand Chartreuse, which is only three leagues from that city. The prior then was Dom Bruno d'Affrinques, born in St. Omer, in Belgium, a person of great learning, deep humility, and still greater simplicity. He received the Bishop with reverence, candor and sincerity, virtues which he possessed in a high degree, and of which, on this occasion, he gave a proof, whereof our Saint often spoke with admiration. After having led his guest to the quarters kept for distinguished visitors, and conversed with the blessed man on ecclesiastical matters, he took his leave, alleging that he must prepare for matins, and regretted that he could not remain any longer in his company. The Bishop was pleased with the punctuality, and the good prior gave for additional excuse that it was one of the special festivals of the order. Accordingly he took leave with all the marks of respect due to a Bishop; but as he was retiring to his cell he was accosted by the Procurator of the monastery, who asked him where he had left the Bishop of Geneva, "In his room, and I took leave of him that I may retire to my cell and be prepared for matins at midnight, in consequence of to-morrow's festival."

(*a*) Matth. v. 5.

"Verily, reverend father, you know a great deal of the courtesies of life! This is only one of the festivals of the Order; but is it every day that we have such Prelates in our desert? have you forgotten that God is pleased with sacrifices offered to hospitality? You will always have leisure enough to sing the praises of God, and of matins you shall have plenty all the time; but who is more fit to entertain the Prelate than yourself? It is a shame for the house to have left him thus alone!"

"My child," replied the reverend father, "I think you are right, and I have done wrong," and straightforth he makes his way back to the guests' quarters, and says to the Bishop in all simplicity, "*Monseigneur*, I have met, on leaving you, one of our officers, who told me that I have done wrong in leaving you alone, and that I shall not fail to have plenty of matins, while we shall not often have the Bishop of Geneva; I believe what he says, and I came straight back to ask your forgiveness, and beg of you to pardon my error, for I assure you I have acted thoughtlessly, and I tell you the truth about it."

The Saintly Bishop was charmed with so much ingenuousness, frankness and simplicity, and I have it from his own lips that he felt as much astonished as if he had seen a miracle.

XVIII.—ABOUT PUNCTUALITY, MODERATION, AND THE MARKS OF A TRUE VOCATION.

Our blessed man always praised the punctuality of that good superior of the Carthusians, who was as faithful as a novice to the least observances, while at the same time he would not overstep, through a misguided fervour, the limits of his rules, lest he should, by his example, lead others astray. More than once he compared him with his predecessor in office, a man who indulged in practices of mortifica-

tion so excessive that it seemed as if he had no body at all, or an iron one. "He was," he said, "like one of those physicians that help to crowd a churchyard: for the desire of imitating his extraordinary mortification, made a great many drop into the graves who, from a zeal without wisdom, taxed their constitutions beyond their strength; whereas the former, with his mildness and moderation, preserved peace and humility in the heart, and health in the body of his subjects.

"A young man presented himself to that excellent superior. The reverend gentleman seeing that he was a delicate youth, as those tenderly nurtured generally are, called his attention to the austerities of the order and the asperity of the place. The young man replied that he had weighed all that, but that God would be his strength. The superior, interested in so much firmness of purpose, resumed with a tone of severity: "What are you thinking of when you apply for admission into our order? Do you imagine it is children's play? Yes, indeed! What if I tell you that to be admitted among us, we require a miracle for the first trial; will you be able to perform one?" "Not I," replied the youth, "but God's grace in me. I feel so much confidence in his goodness, that, as he has called me to serve him in this profession, and he has given me an unconquerable hatred for the world, he will not allow me to look backward, nor to return to that world which I have renounced with all my heart. Ask of me whatever sign you wish and I feel sure that God will do it for me to witness the sincerity of my vocation!" in the utterance of which words his face became radiant and his eyes glowing with light like the stars. Dom Bruno, marvelled at so much firmness, fell upon his neck and shed tears of tender affection. He turned to the bystanders and said, "Brethren, there is a true vocation; and you, my son, have confidence,

God will help you and love you, and you will love and serve him, which all is as good as a miracle."

Our Prelate imitated this good father, when any young woman presented herself for admission to the order of the Visitation. He spoke of nothing else but of Calvary and nails, and thorns and cross, and interior self-denial, and abnegation of one's will, and crucifixion of one's judgment, and of dying to one's self and of living only to God, for God and in God; to live no more according to the senses or natural inclinations, but according to the spirit of faith and the rules of the institute.

XIX.—ABOUT SUPERIORS.

He classed all superiors under four heads:

1. Superiors who are very indulgent to others as well as to themselves. He qualified them as *negligent*, having no care of their charge, allowing the river to overflow into damages, and abandoning the ship to the mercy of the waves. Such superiors are *idols*, because, like idols, *they have mouths and speak not, they have eyes and see not, they have ears and hear not, they have feet and walk not* (*a*), they are *dumb dogs not able to bark* (*b*) against crime and disorder.

2. Others are severe on others as well as on themselves. They often spoil things, wishing to do too much good, and falling into extremes. It is not wise to drive a horse always with a stiff bit; to prevent him from capering, you break his gait. True, a pastor should be the ruler of, and a model to his flock; but he must adopt a system of moderation towards himself; for how can he be kind to others if he is cruel to himself?

3. Yet there are some who are very kind to their

(*a*) Ps. cxiii. 5. (*b*) Isa lvi. 10.

subjects whilst they are very rigorous with themselves. These are more excusable because they are generally disposed to put a benign interpretation on the faults of others.

4. Lastly, there are even some who are very indulgent to themselves and very strict with others. They are unjust, because, like the Pharisees, of whom our Divine Lord speaks, they *lay heavy and insupportable burdens on men's shoulders; but with a finger of their own they will not move them* (*a*); and to them he says, *Physician heal thyself* (*b*); and again, *Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye* (*c*).

He wished that a fifth class could be made out of these few, and in it all should be ranged who, with a god-like equality, would act on the principle, Do unto others as you wish to be done unto yourself, and deal with others as you wish to be dealt by.

XX.—ON SCRUPLES.

In our Saint's opinion scruples originate from a cunning self-esteem,—cunning, because it is so subtle and crafty as to deceive even those who are troubled by them. He proved the assertion by the fact that "those who suffer from this malady will not acquiesce to the judgment of those who are enlightened in the ways of God, and always insist that their opinion should prevail over that of others; whereas if they acquiesced and submitted their judgment to discreet directors, they would at once be cured, and enjoy peace. It stands to reason that a sick man should suffer who will not use the remedies which are offered to him and are calculated to heal him, provided he took them. Who will pity the man who dies of hunger and thirst, having

(*a*) Matth. xxiii. 4. (*b*) Luke iv. 23. (*c*) Matth. vii. 5.

everything that can satisfy the one and quench the other placed within his reach? Holy Writ teaches us that disobedience is a crime equal to idolatry and witchcraft; but what are we to think of the disobedience of scrupulous people, who idolize their opinions so as to be enslaved by them, and who remain, as it were, embedded in their own ideas, against every kind of remonstrance and against all reasons by which it is shown to them that their fears have no foundation. They will always defend themselves by saying that we flatter them, that they are not understood, that they do not explain themselves clear enough."

"A malady, this, of difficult cure, and, like jealousy, it gathers fuel from every object. God preserve you from this tedious disease, which I look upon as the quartan fever, or the jaundice of the soul!'

XXI.—OF A CRIMINAL WHO DESPAIRED OF HIS SALVATION.

A certain man, condemned to die, would not make his confession, because the hideousness and blackness of his crimes made him believe that there was no hope for him. The Prelate found him resolved to undergo his punishment and thence pass into hell, looking upon himself as the prey of the devil and a victim of hell. The Saint listened to him, and then remarked, "Would you not prefer, my brother, to be the prey of God and a victim of the Cross of Christ?"

"Can you doubt it?" replied the culprit; "but, indeed, God will never look upon such a sink of iniquity, and a victim so abominable!"

"O God!" said the holy man, in his heart, "remember thy ancient mercies, and the promise thou hast made that a *bruised reed* thou shalt not break, nor a *smoking flax* quench; thou who willest not the death of the sinner,

but rather his life and conversion, oh! make the last moments of this unfortunate man happy!" Then addressing the prisoner: "Anyhow, would you not prefer to give yourself up to God than to the devil?"

"No doubt," answered the other; "but he will not care much for one like myself."

"It is just for men of your stamp that the Eternal Father sent his Son upon earth, and even for worse than you, for such as Judas, and those who crucified him. Jesus Christ came to save the sinners, not the just."

"Can you assure me that it will not be an impertinence on my part to appeal to his mercy?"

"On the contrary it would be the height of impertinence to think that his mercy is not infinite, above all imaginable sins, and that his redemption was not so plentiful as to make grace *abound more* where *sin has abounded.* Oh! look up to his mercy, which stands above all his works, and always rises above his justice, is heightened the more according as the greater is the heap of our sins, the throne of that mercy having our misery for its pedestal."

By such reasoning, drawn from the principles of faith, which was not entirely spent in that soul, he succeeded in awakening his hope, which was altogether deadened, and made him resign himself wholly into the hand of God, for life and death, to dispose of him according to his good pleasure.

"But he will damn me, because he is just."

"But he will pardon you if you cry unto him for mercy, for he is merciful, and he has promised pardon to all who shall invoke it with an humble and contrite heart."

"Well, then, let him damn me if it be his pleasure, I am in his hands; can he not do with me even as the potter does with the clay?"

"But better for you to say with the prophet, *I am thine,*

O Lord, *save thou me!*" At last he lead him to make his confession with great compunction, and after due preparation the reconciled sinner met his death with great firmness, deep feeling of contrition for his past life, and a total resignation to the most holy will of God. The last words he uttered, at the suggestion of the Lishop, were: "O Jesus, I give myself up and abandon myself entirely into thy hands."

In connection with this, often have I heard him say that it was impossible that God should allow a soul to be lost, who, in departing from the body, had his will entirely resigned to that of his divine majesty. Accordingly, whenever he assisted dying persons, all his endeavours were to determine them to submit their will wholly to that of God, and he scarcely spoke of anything else. He would repeat, again and again: "O God, thy will!" or, "Yes, Father, ever as thou findest it good! O my Lord, not my will but thine be done!"

XXII.—NOTHING HAPPENS TO US BUT BY THE WILL OF GOD.

He recognized God's will in all things. He said: "Except sin, nothing happens to us but by the will of God, let that be good or evil: the good, for God is the source of all good—every perfect gift descends from the Father of Light; the evil, for in the city which the Lord has built there is no evil that the Lord has not made, which is to be understood of punishment, inasmuch as God cannot will sin, albeit he permits it, and allows the human will to act according to that natural liberty which he has given to it.

"Then, again, we cannot, properly speaking, say that sin befel us, because what happens to us must come from outside, whilst sin originates inside of us and comes forth from the heart. O! what a source of happiness it

would be to us were we accustomed to receive all things from him whose paternal hand never opened but to fill all creatures with benediction! What a balm to our sufferings! How much honey we would then gather from the stones, how much oil from the hardest of rocks! Prosperity could not then throw us off our guard, for we should feel that God sends to us both prosperity and adversity for particular purposes of his divine glory and of our salvation! Let us think much on this truth, and let us see God's hand in all that happens, and let us look at all that happens only in God, that God may be honored in all things, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our consolation in all our trials, and will help us to draw profit from whatever evils may encompass us."

XXIII.—HOW THE BISHOP WAS HONORED BY ALL, AND ESPECIALLY BY M. DE LESDIGUIERES.

The worth of our Saint was universally acknowledged both by Catholics and Protestants. When he preached the Lent in Grenoble, M. de Lesdiguières, Marshal of France and the King's Lieutenant, had not yet become a Catholic, yet he received the Bishop with extraordinary marks of honor, invited him often to his table, visited him at his lodgings, and even attended some of his sermons, holding his learning in great esteem and his sanctity in high veneration.

Those who belonged to the so-called reformed persuasion were greatly alarmed at this, and at the private conferences which he often had with the Bishop of Geneva. He never tired of praising him, invariably styling him *Monsieur de Géneve* (*a*), and exhibiting towards him a marked deference.

(*a*) *My Lord of Geneva.*—The bishops of that city were also its princes, But Geneva had become entirely Calvinistic, the bishop deprived of his revenue and forced to retire to Annecy; hence it must have been galling to Protestant ears to have Francis acknowledged as Prince of Geneva, by

The ministers in vain stormed and threatened excommunication against those of their party who dared to attend the Bishop's sermons. They even held consistories to frame a remonstrance to the lieutenant against the exceedingly great honors paid to the *Bishop of Annecy* (as *they* called him,) his intimacy with him, and his attending his sermons to the great scandal of the Protestants. Accordingly some delegates were appointed to wait on M. de Lesdiguières. That nobleman, hearing of their intended visit, sent them word that if they came on business they would be welcome, but if they meant to lay before him consistorial remonstrances, he wished them to know that they would enter by the door, indeed, but would make their exit through the window. Wherefore they abandoned their project, but advised among themselves to have the subject broached to the marshal by one of the most notable gentlemen of the province, a creature of their own, who accordingly took upon himself to lay the matter before M. de Lesdiguières. M. de Lesdiguières replied thus: "Say to those gentlemen that I am old enough to know how to behave. I had been a Catholic until I was thirty, and I am well acquainted with the manner in which the Roman Catholics treat their bishops, and with what respect bishops are treated by princes and kings. We live in a state where they hold a rank far different from that of our ministry, who, after all, are only curates among us, inasmuch as they reject episcopal authority, although so well founded in the Holy Bible. Tell Mr. ——— that when I see sons and brothers of princes and kings become ministers, as I see bishops and archbishops and cardinals, I will then look for the honor I must pay them. (Mr. ——— was a min-

right. While we are penning this note we are informed that there is a probability of a Catholic bishop being appointed for Geneva this very year, for the first time since Calvin's usurpation. It will be another triumph of Pius' pontificate.

ister of obscure birth, who had been one of the marshal's servants, and who by his master's favor had been raised to the rank of those who ministered in the so-called Reformed Church of Grenoble.) As regards *My Lord of Geneva*, were I as much Lord of Geneva as he is, and sovereign prince of that city as he also is, I would make them obey me, indeed, and acknowledge my authority. I know what his titles and rights are better than Mr. ——— or any of his party; it is for me to lecture them on that score, and for them to keep quiet if they know what is good for them. They are too insignificant and too young to teach a man of my age and condition in life."

After this he treated the good Bishop with renewed affection and honor, to the great vexation of the Reformed. He was so much enlightened by his intercourse with the holy Prelate, and so well impressed with the truths of our religion, that his conversion was easily accomplished, when he became Constable of France, in the possession of which dignity he died a fervent Catholic, and a most happy death.

XXIV.—HOW A POOR MAN LONGED FOR HEAVEN.

While employed in the visitation of his diocese, the Bishop was told that a poor peasant, at the gate of death, wished to receive his blessing. He went, and found the good man at his last, but perfectly sensible. Rejoiced to see his Bishop, he cried: "My lord, God be blessed that before I close my eyes I am vouchsafed to receive your holy benediction." Then he begged to make his confession, and the bystanders withdrew. After he had gone through, and being still alone with his Bishop, he asked him: "My Lord, d'ye think I'll die?" The blessed man, thinking that perhaps he had some fear, thought of giving him courage by saying: "I have seen some coming back from

a greater distance; but you should place all your confidence in God, who is the Master of Life and Death."

"But, my lord, d'ye think, in your opinion, I'll die?"

"My son, a doctor is the best man to tell you; but I can say this much, that I consider your soul very well disposed, and were you called away some other time you might not be so well prepared. The best thing for you to do is not to think at all whether you shall live or die, but abandon yourself entirely into the hands of God's providence and mercy, that he may dispose of you as he thinks best, and his good pleasure will certainly be your greatest good."

"My lord, it is not because I fear death that I put the question, but rather from fear that I might not die, for I feel very unwilling to recover from this sickness."

Blessed Francis was astonished to hear words expressing a wish to die, such as are uttered only by persons advanced in perfection, or by such as are leaning towards despair or are suffering from melancholy. Accordingly he asked the sick man whether he had any trouble, and what made him feel a disgust for life, the love of which is so strong in all of us.

"My lord, this world is so insignificant that I wonder how people can love it. Had God not so disposed that we should stay in it until he calls us away, I had quit it long ago."

Still the Bishop imagined that there was some great sorrow which made this man hate life, and accordingly asked him whether he had any trouble of body or mind.

"None whatever. I have always enjoyed perfect health until this time of life, and I am seventy years old. I have all the comforts I can wish. I was never troubled by poverty, thank God."

Then the Saint asked him whether there existed any misunderstanding between him and his wife or children.

"The best understanding in the world. They have never caused me the least uneasiness, and the only regret I may have in leaving this world would be that I have to be separated from them."

At last the Saint asked him: "Why 'then' this wish to die?"

"My lord, I have heard so much preaching about the blessedness of another life and the joys of paradise, that I feel as if I was in a prison or a dungeon."

And then opening the flood-gates of his own heart, he dilated on the beauties of heaven with such an abundance of light and depth of feeling, that the good Bishop was lost in wonder, and wept tears of joy, knowing that the poor man had learned all these things from God himself. Then again descending, as it were, from those heights, he dilated on the nothingness of the greatness, wealth, and pleasures of this world, and with so much vividness that what he said made even our Saint loath them more and more.

At last the Bishop felt perfect confidence in the disposition of the dying man, yet, to guard against the danger of falling into extremes, he suggested to him acts of resignation, and indifference both to living and dying, after the example of St. Paul and St. Martin. A few hours after, having received the sacrament of extreme unction at the hands of our Saint, he breathed his last most placidly, without the least struggle, and in death he looked even more beautiful than he did in life.

XXV.—MAN'S HEART MUST BE KEPT FREE OF THE WORLD'S INFLUENCES.

There are both terrestrial and celestial aspirations. We cannot have enough of the latter, for they are like a dove's wings, carrying our soul to God. But as for the former,

aiming as they do only to transitory and perishable goods, we must absolutely keep them out of our hearts. St. Augustine calls them the bird-lime of spiritual wings. Of these desires our Saint kept entirely free. He would say: "Few things I wish, and for them I even care little. I have very few desires, and were I to be born again I would like to have none at all."

XXVI.—THE SCRUPLES WHICH TROUBLED A MAN VERY RICH AND VERY CHARITABLE

During his stay in Paris, in 1619, he was called upon by a gentleman largely endowed with worldly goods, but still more blessed with an abundant piety and a tender compassion for the poor. That good man asked our Saint whether he could save himself in the possession of so much wealth, and expressed great anxiety for the salvation of his soul. The blessed Prelate questioned him as to the sources of his fears, to which the other replied: "Because I am too rich, and you know the Gospel describes the difficulty in which a rich a man is placed as to his salvation, so as to render it next to impossible."

The Bishop still at a loss how to form an opinion, asked him whether he was in possession of any ill-gotten wealth.

"Of none whatever," replied the other. "My ancestors, people as they were well to do in the world, have bequeathed me nothing of the kind, and what surplus I have has all been put together by my savings, and my own honest labor. God forbid I should possess aught that belonged to others; my conscience is perfectly at ease on that score."

"What then? do you make a bad use of your riches?"

"I live up to my station in life; but I fear I do not give enough to the poor, and you know that we shall one day be judged on that point."

"Have you children?"

"Yes, but they are all well provided for, and have not the least need of my assistance."

"In truth," replied our Saint, "I cannot see what can put those scruples in your head. You are the first man who has ever complained to me of being too rich: people generally speaking never have enough."

Then it became an easy task to settle the mind of that good gentleman, who otherwise evinced utmost docility. The Saint afterwards informed me that that personage had held positions of the highest trust, and acquitted himself most honorably in them. Yet he resigned them all to devote himself to works of mercy, frequenting hospitals and the homes of bashful poor, whose wants he relieved to the amount of one-half of his income. Besides other legacies, in his last will he instituted Jesus Christ his first heir, bequeathing to the Hotel-Dieu an equal portion with that be left to his children, and ended a very meritorious life by a happy death.

XXVII.—ABOUT REFORMING ONE'S INTERIOR.

He was wont to say that Grace imitated nature, and not art, in her workings. Art always begins with the exterior, as we see in painting and sculpture; whereas nature always begins with the interior, hence the saying that the heart is the first to live and the last to die. When he set to work in leading a soul to interior life, and detaching it from the world, he never spoke of the exterior, he did not say a word about the wearing of the hair, dressing, or the like; he spoke of the heart, and the heart he addressed, knowing that when that point is once gained, the rest falls an easy possession. "Don't you see," he would say, "that when the house is on fire the furniture is thrown out of the window? Even so, when the love of

God takes possession of a heart, all that is not God's becomes worthless to us."

Once it was remarked in his presence that it was a matter of surprise how a certain lady of quality and very religious, who was under his directions, had not given up wearing ear-rings, to which he replied: "In truth I do not even know that she has ears, veiled as she is when she comes to confession. But then I rather think that the saintly Rebecca, pious as she was, lost none of her sanctity because she wore the ear-rings which Eliezer had given her in behalf of Isaac (*a*)."

But so it happened that this pious lady took to wearing a cross studded with diamonds; this also was reported to the Saint as seemingly a great extravagance, but he replied that even this vanity was rather edifying to him. "Alas!" he added, "I wish all the crosses of the world were ornamented with diamonds and most precious stones; would it not be indeed like employing the spoils of Egypt for the honor of the tabernacle, and the glorying of one's self in the cross of Jesus Christ? What better use could she put her jewels to than honoring the standard of our redemption?

XXVIII.—ONE OF TAULER'S FINE SAYINGS.

Our Bishop thought a great deal of that fine maxim which Tauler had learned from the poor peasant whom God had pointed to him for a master of spiritual life. To the question, "Where had he found God?" the peasant replied, "Where I left myself; and where I lost God, there I found myself." We move to and fro between two cities, Babylon and Jerusalem: in the one we dwell in self-love in preference to the love of God; in the other the love of God obtains the preference over self-love. The former

(*a*) Romans xxiv.

love has built Babylon, and goes even so far as to hate God; whereas Jerusalem has been built by the latter, which makes us even hate ourselves. Sin is an aversion to God, and a conversion to the creature; accordingly grace performs this change in us, that it turns us from the creature and leads us back to God. Thus the Holy Ghost teaches us that we cannot serve two masters, God and Mammon; that there can be no union between light and darkness, Christ and Belial (*a*). The true life of Christians consists in this, that we die to ourselves and our passions, and live in Jesus Christ. But to die to Christ in order to live to one's self and one's passions, is the broad road to eternal perdition. Does not the Apostle say, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die: but if by the spirit ye mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live (*b*)."

XXIX.—DRYNESS IN PRAYER.

Whenever a Sister complained of her interior desolation and dryness in meditation, he would simply say: "For my part, I have always preferred dry preserves to liquid ones," and this saying he confirmed with those words of the prophet, *In a desert land, and where there is no way and no water; so in the sanctuary have I come before thee, to see thy power and thy glory* (*c*). Thus the manna, that food of angels, was only a small grain, and very dry; but no sooner did the people wish to have it changed with flesh, a more juicy nourishment, than *as yet their meat was in their mouth, and the wrath of God came upon them* (*d*).

Very few will believe this, a great truth however, that the union of God with a just and faithful soul is far more intimate and close amid dereliction and desolation, than in he enjoyment of devotion and sensible consolations; inas-

(*a*) II Corinthians vi. 14. (*b*) Romans viii. 13.
(*c*) Psalm lxii. 3. (*d*) Ibid., lxxvii. 34.

much as the more the soul is taken with the consolations of God, the less she clings to the God of consolation, as we see it done by bees, of whom those which make the most wax give the least honey.

What dereliction can we imagine greater than that of our Saviour on the cross, who was forced to cry, "My Father, my Father, why hast thou forsaken me?" At the same time we cannot doubt that the Saviour was at that very moment intimately united to the will of his Father, with that union in which consists the end of all consummations, and for which he cries that "It is consummated." Thus at last, in this perfect consummation, he resigns his soul into the hands of his Father.

PART FOURTH.

I.—ABOUT SINGULARITY.

The holy Bishop was ever on the alert to put down singularities, not only in religious communities, whereof they are a real pest, but also among lay persons who make profession of piety, lest they render virtue both ridiculous and hateful. He insisted that in exterior manners one should conform himself to the ways of those who belong to the same condition of life, and avoid all singularities, following the example of our divine Saviour, who was *in fashion formed as a man*, and was *made in the likeness of men*, except in sin. In his life he followed this rule most strictly. During fourteen years that I have been under his direction, and have watched even his smallest act or the least word, I assure you I could never discover so much as the least thing that approached to singularity.

I will now confess a ruse of mine. On the occasion of his regular annual visit to my house, which lasted eight days, I contrived to have holes made in the walls of the room he occupied, that I might watch him at his studies, prayer, reading, and meditation—how he sat, and walked, and went to bed, and arose, and wrote, in a word, through all those movements, in which one being alone is thrown off one's guard. But I never saw him failing in the least rule of the most composed behavior. Alone or in company, he was always the same: a perfect uniformity in his outward behavior, just as his heart was always perfectly uniform.

As he began to pray he seemed at once wrapt in God's presence, and that of his angels: his posture as quiet as a dove's, his countenance full of reverence. I never saw him, even when alone, to cross legs or lean his head on his hand. The gravity was so blended with amiability as to inspire with love those who were in his presence. Often has he remarked to me that our exterior behavior should be like water, the best of which is the most limpid, the purest, and that which has the least taste. Yet while he was so free from singularity, this very absence of singularity rendered him the more singular to me.

I shall never forget what was told me once by a truly great and good man in Paris, to wit: nothing gave him a more vivid idea of the conversation of our divine Saviour on earth, as the presence and demeanor, almost angelic, of our Blessed Bishop, of whom it might truly be said that he had not only *put on*, but was filled with, Jesus Christ.

II.—ON THE CHASTITY OF THE HEART.

I cannot find words expressive enough to convey an idea of the great esteem in which our Saint held the purity of heart. That of the body he compared to the bark, but the heart's purity he called the marrow; the former are the stem, the branches, the leaves; the latter is the root. He said that this purity of heart consisted in being perfectly free from all unlawful affection. St. Bernard considered it nothing short of a miracle to converse with persons of different sex, and not to be tainted in one's purity of heart, or even not to lose it altogether.

Yet there is another purity of heart, and that consists in the purity of intention; oh! but this purity is rare indeed! for he alone possesses it, who, remarked the holy prelate, sees everything in God, and God in everything. It is a foretaste of that life in heaven, where God is all to all.

III.—ON THE EPISCOPAL DIGNITY, AND THE RESIDENCE OF BISHOPS.

Two great Popes, Clement VIII. and Paul V., held St. Francis in high esteem, and the latter often thought of making him Cardinal. The Bishop was told of it. One day I broke the subject to him, and he replied thus: "But after all, how much do you think would this new dignity help me in promoting the interest of our Lord and of his Church? Rome would become the place of my residence, but would that be a more advantageous post than this, where God has placed me? Would I find there more work to do, more enemies to fight, more souls to direct, more cares, more practices of devotion, more visitations to make, more episcopal functions to perform?"

"You would then," I observed, "share in the solicitude of all the churches; and from the charge of one single church you would pass to that of the universal Church, in common with the Pope and his Cardinals."

"Still, you must observe," he added, "that the Cardinals most distinguished for learning and piety, if they are Bishops and have a diocese, give up their residence in Rome, which, after all, is only of ecclesiastic law, and retire to their folds, where they are bound to reside by divine law in force of their pastorate, which enjoins upon them to watch over the flock, and to feed and lead the souls entrusted to their care."

On this subject he was wont to repeat an anecdote of the illustrious and saintly Cardinal Bellarmino. Unknown to himself and against his will he had been created Cardinal by Clement VIII., and also appointed to the Archiepiscopal See of Capua. Immediately after his consecration he made arrangements to go to his church. The Pope, who then was Paul V., needed his presence in Rome to take part in

the different Councils or *Sacred Congregations*, as they are called. Accordingly he sent for him to know whether he was determined to go to Capua. The Cardinal replied that he was far more determined on that point than he had been on his being consecrated. That, having been forced by a command of His Holiness to submit to that burden, it was but in reason that he should carry it, and that he never thought that His Holiness would need him in Rome since he had bestowed upon him the charge of that church. The Pope remarked that he would grant him a dispensation; then Bellarmino replied: "Holy Father, this is not what I have been all my life teaching in the schools, where I have maintained that the residence of Bishops is of Divine right, and therefore indispensable."

"At least," urged the Pope, "give me half the year."

"And who will be responsible for my flock during those six months?"

"Well, then, say three months," still urged the Pope.

But the Cardinal only urged the same question of on whom would the responsibility fall; and he went to Capua, where he resided three years, and during that time, for a respite from his labors, he composed his beautiful commentaries on the Psalms, nor could the Pope make him leave Capua for Rome until he had allowed him to resign his charge into the hands of a very worthy prelate, the choice of the Cardinal himself. Thus thought that great man, a pillar of the church in our times, and one who has furnished us with buckler and sword against all heresies. And this was also the opinion of St. Charles Borromeo, the gem of Bishops and Cardinals, as well as of his most worthy successor, Cardinal Frederic, one of the most learned and saintly prelates of the Church.

Our blessed Bishop valued the dignities both of church and state only so far as they would help in promoting the glory of God and the interest of His Church.

IV.—HIS PROMOTION TO THE BISHOPRIC OF GENEVA.

No one taketh to himself the honor, but he who is called by God, as Aaron (*a*). These words apply most perfectly to the case of our Bishop's promotion. He took the church for his portion with no other aim but that of serving God, and he went through all degrees, was canon, and parish priest, and provost, and missionary, and director of souls, but the thought that his Bishop would choose him for his successor, never entered his mind. No words ever passed between them on the subject, either directly or indirectly; and when the Bishop of Geneva broached the matter to him he did not waste words in vain excuses or protests, but abandoned himself entirely into the hands of God.

Thus Bishop de Granier, his predecessor, without our Saint ever taking the least part in the matter, arranged everything with the Duke of Savoy, proposed his nomination to his Holiness,—and the latter, well acquainted with the merits of Francis, appointed him at once, but on condition that he should repair to Rome, there to undergo his examination in full consistory,—and he went, and was examined with an admirable success, the account whereof is well worth reading in his life by Marsollier. Such call to the Sanctuary could not be but fruitful in extraordinary good effects. And thus we know that during his consecration he sensibly experienced the operations of graces infused into his soul by the most Holy Trinity, for the most perfect accomplishment of the episcopal duties, while the three consecrating Bishops imposed their hands on him; thenceforward he always looked upon himself as especially consecrated to the most Holy Trinity.

V.—HE REFUSES THE ARCHBISHOPRIC OF PARIS.

In 1619 he went to Paris, in company with the Princes

(*a*) Heb. v. 4.

of Savoy, and remained there for eight months, employing himself most assiduously and most successfully in the service of souls, for the greatest glory of God. He was equally cherished and highly esteemed by the flock as well as by their pastor, Cardinal de Retz, a man of incomparable merit as a statesman and a Bishop. Sincerity of manners and a heavenly conversation endeared Francis to all so much that the Archbishop formed the resolution of having him appointed for his coadjutor. He never imagined that our blessed man would offer any resistance, and arranged the matter with the King. But when our Saint heard of it, he undid all the Cardinal had done with so much address, that the latter was thunderstruck with the noble disinterestedness of the Bishop of Geneva. Among other excuses he alleged that it would have been unbecoming, indeed, to discard a poor spouse for the sake of a rich one; and he added, with great firmness, that were he to divorce from his spouse (the diocese of Geneva) he would *not* take another, but he would follow the advice of St. Paul,—Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife (*a*); and he concluded by saying that having given all his affections to his own church, he had none to give away to another.

VI.—HIS LOVE OF RETIREMENT.

Had he returned from Lyons, where he died, he had made up his mind to enter into solitude. After so many years spent in performing the duties of Martha, he would devote the remainder of his days to the offices of Mary. Indeed, he had even built a hermitage in a quiet and secluded spot on the banks of the lake of Annecy. He had, moreover, restored a chapel near the spot, and four or five cells were built near by, in a close. At a little distance therefrom existed a monastery of Benedictine monks, who

(*a*) I Cor. vii. 27.

were fervent in the observance of the strict rule introduced by his endeavors, and in their company he felt the greatest happiness, as if amidst dear brothers and children. It was, then, his purpose to retire into that holy solitude, after having resigned into the hands of his brother, Bishop of Chalcedon, and his coadujtor, the charge of his diocese. Of this favorite project of his he was wont to say, "Once in our solitude, we will serve God with our breviary, our beads, and our pen. I will then enjoy a holy leisure,—trace on paper, for the glory of God and the good of souls, what I have revolved in my mind for the last thirty years, and has been the subject of my sermons, instructions, and private meditations. I have an abundance of notes, but I moreover hope that God will inspire me, and new lights will shine from heaven as thick as the flakes of snow which whiten in winter the tops of our mountains. Oh! who will give me the wings of a dove to fly to that sacred rest, to breathe freely under the shade of the cross! There shall I *expect until my change come.*"

Alas! God had reserved for him another and far more sweet repose!

VII.—VIRTUES SHOULD BE HIDDEN.

A certain prelate was entertained by our Bishop with the kindest hospitality for several days. On a Wednesday evening he called at his guest's room and requested him to come to supper.

"Supper!" exclaimed the visitor," "this is not a day for supper. It is very little we can do to fast at least once a week."

The blessed man withdrew, but ordered the meal to the prelate's quarters, and he went down to supper with his visitor's chaplains, and those of his own family. The chaplains told our Saint that their Bishop was so exact in

all his practices, whether of devotion or of obligation, that, no matter what company he had in the house, he never changed; he would indeed come to the table on fast-days, but he would not touch anything but what was strictly within his own prescribed rules of abstinence and fasting.

Blessed Francis one day related this occurrence to me, and remarked that condescension is the daughter of charity, while at the same time fasting is the twin-sister to obedience; and so as obedience takes place before sacrifice, there should be no hesitation whatever in giving condescension and hospitality the preference over fasting. "In fact," said he, "we should never become so strongly attached to even the most pious practices as not to be at liberty to interrupt them if a proper cause demanded it; otherwise, under the pretext of firmness of purpose and of fidelity, a very fine self-love creeps into one's heart, and transforms into the end what should only be the means; in place of aiming at God it persuades to cling to the means which leads to him. And as regards the case in question, that Wednesday's fast properly concealed would have kept many others out of view; nor is the art of concealing one's virtue less virtuous than the virtue which is concealed. God is a hidden God, who delights in being prayed to, adored and served, in secret; so the Gospel assures us. It is well known how the foolish king of the Jews lost all his goods, in punishment for his vanity of showing them to barbarous princes (*a*). *Crede mihi, bene qui latuit, bene vixit* (*b*). Had he been seen to take his supper on a Wednesday, nobody would have suspected that he was in the habit of fasting every Wednesday. He might have postponed his fast to a Saturday or any other day, or he might even have not fasted at all, and make fast give pre-

(*a*) IV Kings xxx. 13.

(*b*) "He lives not ill who lives and dies unknown."—Ovid.

cedence to the virtue of condescension. I except, however, the case of a vow, for then we should be faithful to our engagement to the death, and care naught for what others might say, provided we served God."

VIII.—ABOUT FASTING.

Once he asked me whether I found difficulty in fasting. "So little," said I, "that I am scarcely ever hungry, and when I sit at table, very seldom have any appetite."

"Then, you do not fast."

"Why? is not this kind of mortification much recommended in the Scriptures?"

"It *is*, for such as have a better appetite than you have. Perform some other good work, and punish your body with some other exercise."

"But I am not of the strongest to bear much austerity."

"Fasting is one of the greatest austerities; for while all others only prune and glaze the tree, fasting puts the axe to the root. A body scantily fed is easily kept under subjection, but if well nourished, it will surely kick. Those who are naturally sober and temperate have a marvellous aptitude for mental application and spiritual pursuits. Their bodies are like a well-bitted horse that can be easily managed. The spirit cannot well bear a body that is too fat, as the body cannot well maintain a spirit which is too poor."

At the same time he counselled a uniform treatment, averring that God wishes to be honored with *rational worship*, and he added that it is an easy matter to diminish the force of the body were it necessary; whereas it is not so very easy to restore it when it is broken. It is easy to wound, but not equally so to heal. The spirit must deal with the body as if with a child, when it is docile, and not to break it; but should it rebel, its rebellion must be put

down, even as St. Paul says, *I chastise my body and bring it under subjection* (a).

IX.—BISHOP CAMUS CONSULTS ST. FRANCIS ABOUT RESIGNING HIS SEAT.

To my consulting him on my wish to retire into private life, he replied with St. Augustin, that "the love of eternal truth seeks a holy rest, and true charity or the truth of love makes us undertake those labors which are just." He esteemed very highly the part of Mary, which our Saviour calls *the best part*, yet he considered that of Martha the most suitable to this life, and that of Mary more proper of heaven. He made an exception, however, in cases of extraordinary vocations, in which the will of God is so manifest that it cannot be resisted; or even when one has no talent to serve God in the works of Martha, but has these which befit him for a contemplative life; and again when one has exhausted his strength and life in the salvation of souls, and retires into solitude for the purpose of preparing himself for a happy death.

He, therefore, did not hesitate to qualify my purpose as a temptation, and spoke to me in terms so conclusive, that I never more, as long as he lived, broached the subject to him. But since his death the same desire goads me into the resolution of retiring to some secluded and safe haven, whence I can see the storms agitating the ocean, without fear or danger to my soul.

X.—OF DIVERS KINDS OF HUMILITY.

He distinguished two kinds of humility, interior and exterior. Unless the latter is accompanied by the former, it will be full of dangers—it will only be like a thin cover-

(a) I Cor. ix. 27.

ing, a deceitful and hypocritical appearance; but when it is the offspring of the interior, it is a salutary one and a source of edification to our neighbors. He also made a distinction between the humility of the intellect and that of the will. The first is very common, for who ignores that we are nothing? and hence so many fine discourses on the nothingness of oneself and of all creatures. But the second is rare, indeed; for few there are who love humiliations. Several are the degrees of this love: first, to love humiliations; second, to desire them; the third consists in the practice, either by seeking the opportunities of humiliations, or cheerfully submitting to them when they present themselves.

Our blessed Saint esteemed above all this last degree of humility, as there need be a great deal more of self-denial in receiving, enduring, and cherishing those humiliations, which come upon us without any seeking of our own, than in those which we chose ourselves. In making a choice we are exposed to the deceptions of self-love, unless we possess a most correct and pure intention; and, therefore, where there is less of our own there will be found more of God's will.

When we have attained such a degree that for the love of God we rejoice in humiliations and contempt, and in them are filled with consolation, as the Apostle testifies of himself, then the deeper our humility is, the more sublime it will also grow.

XI.—ON THE POVERTY OF SPIRIT.

Three virtues, according to our Saint, are necessary to constitute the poverty of spirit. 1. Simplicity; 2. Humility; 3. Christian Poverty. Simplicity consists in the singleness of aim, looking only to God, and to him alone referring the multiplicity of opportunities arising from any

object that is not God. Humility, as the beggar, feels like the last of men, so the true humble does not consider any thing as inferior to, and looks upon, himself as nothing, or as a useless servant. Christian poverty is divided in three classes: 1st, Affective and non-effective, which is an excellent one, and can be practiced in the midst of wealth, as was the case with Abraham, and David, and St. Louis, and so many holy persons who were indeed poor in their *affection*, being ready to accept poverty with benedictions and thanks, were God to reduce them to a state of it. 2nd, Effective but not affective, which is a very unhappy state, inasmuch as a person thus situated feels all the effects of poverty, and is miserable for not possessing that which he ardently desires. 3rd. Affective and effective, which is recommended in the Gospel, and has become our lot either from birth or some reverse of fortune. If we are reconciled with our condition in life, and bless God who has placed us in it, then we tread in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and his Holy Mother, and the Apostles, who all lived in poverty.

Another way of practicing this poverty of spirit consists in that we follow the counsel of Jesus Christ, sell *all we have and give to the poor*, and walk after Jesus Christ in his poverty, which he embraced out of love for us, and in order that we should become rich through the means of this very poverty. And this is practiced in a most worthy manner when he who has quitted all his goods for the sake of the Lord, labors not only to support his own life, but also to have wherewith to give alms. Thus did the Apostle glory himself, when he said, *To my necessities, and to those who are with me, these hands have ministered* (a).

(a) Acts xx. 34.

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XII—TO BE CONTENTED WITH GOD.

A distinguished person, and one who made profession of great devotion, met with a great wreck of her earthly goods. The loss rendered her inconsolable, and in the excess of her grief she allowed herself to utter expressions of dissatisfaction against God, as if Providence had forsaken her. Our Bishop endeavored at first to turn her affections away from this earth and lead them to God; then he asked her whether God was not something more than the goods she had lost—aye, even more than all the richest possessions of the world—and again, whether having loved God when she possessed all those goods she could not love him without them.

The other replied that it was all very good in theory, very easy to teach, but very hard to practice.

"In very truth, that must be a penurious soul to which God is not enough," replied the Saint.

The word "penurious" smote her heart, and she shed an abundance of tears, regretted her former rebelliousness, and became perfectly reconciled with her reverses.

XIII.—LOVE THE POOR.

To love another is not only to wish him well, but also to do him what good we can. Otherwise we fall under the reproach of St. James against those who give the poor only words of comfort without any *material* aid, although they have the means (*a*). The love of blessed Francis for the poor was so intense that in their regard he seemed to be an acceptor of persons, preferring them to the rich both in spirituals and in temporals, acting like the good physician who shows his predilection for the worst among the sick.

I was one day waiting my turn to go to confession to

(*a*) James ii. 15.

him, whilst he was hearing a poor blind woman who lived on food begged from door to door. As I wondered at the length of her confession, he replied: "She sees far more clearly in the ways of the Lord than many who have good eyes."

On another occasion, sailing with him on the lake of Geneva, I heard the boatmen calling him "Father," and addressing him with great familiarity. He said: "Hear those good people! they call me their father, and indeed they love me as such. Oh! how much more good they do my heart than those who call me 'Monseigneur'!" (*a*)

XIV.—WHAT HE THOUGHT OF SENECA.

Once I quoted these words of Seneca: "A strong-minded man will use earthen dishes with as much satisfaction and pleasure as if they were made of silver; but he is still stronger who eats from silver dishes thinking no more about their value than if they were of clay."

"That philosopher," said he, "was right in saying so, for the former is repaid by a hollow imagination which may not be devoid of vanity, but the latter proves himself far above riches, for which he cares no more than if they were dross."

But as I pushed the matter, praising that philosopher, and remarking that his principles approached very closely those of the Gospel: "Yes," he replied, "in the letter but not in the spirit."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because," answered he, "the spirit of the Gospel leads us to divest ourselves of our own evil propensities, and put on Jesus Christ and the virtue which descends from on high, to deny ourselves, and to place our whole trust in

(*a*) *Mon-Seigneur*, i.e., My Lord.

grace; whereas that philosopher is forever thrusting self before us, and will not allow his adept to draw motives of joy from any other source but self, which is all manifest pride. The Christian sage must look small to himself, in fact so small as to feel as if he were nothing; whereas your philosopher wishes the wise man of his creation to place himself above all things, to look upon himself as the lord of all, and the builder of his own fortune, and all this is rampant vanity."

XV.—HE REFUSES A PENSION OFFERED HIM BY THE KING.

The great Henry IV. held our prelate in the highest esteem, and whilst he was waiting for the opportunity of bestowing on him one of the wealthiest bishopries, he offered him a large pension to make up for the scantiness of the income of his own see. Francis wished neither to quit his diocese nor give umbrage to his prince by becoming pensioner of a foreign king, but at the same time to avoid cause of offence to Henry, he expressed his gratitude for the honor of being remembered by so great a monarch, and begged of him to allow him to remain at the post to which God had appointed him in his church, holding it as a principle that bishopries were not to be valued by their revenue, but by the opportunities by them offered to render service to God, in which case he did not think his see offered any the less than any other. As for the pension, he did not intend to refuse it, coming as it did from a royal hand, and one so worthy of all respect; but he begged of his majesty to allow it to be deposited in the hands of the treasurer until he may need it in the service of God or in behalf of the poor, for God had until then kept him amply provided for whatever he needed for his support. King Henry was charmed with his great address and prudence,

and remarked: "It was, indeed, the most gracious and most delicately conveyed refusal he ever received. Francis," he added, "was a man not to be bribed, having proved himself so far above the influence of royal gifts."

XVI.—ABOUT COMMUNITY LIFE.

He always praised *common* life very highly. For this reason he did not allow the Sisters of Visitation, of whom he was the founder, any extraordinary austerities in their dress, bed, or food, regulating all these things by those rules which can be followed by all who will lead a Christian life in the world. In this his spiritual daughters followed the example of Jesus Christ, his holy mother, and his disciples, who lead no other kind of life. For the rest they should yield to the discretion and judgment of their superiors, who will determine on the expediency of extraordinary mortifications according to the different cases of individuals who may stand in need of them.

Yet our Saint often performed acts of corporal austerity, but he insisted that they should be performed according to wisdom; that they should preserve the purity of the body but not destroy one's health. In a word, he preferred the life of Jesus Christ to that of John the Baptist.

XVII.—EAT WHAT IS SET BEFORE YOU.

He often repeated those words of the Gospel, "Eat such things as are set before you," (*a*) and he averred that it was a greater mortification to be satisfied with every kind of food than to chose always the worst. Often the daintiest food is not that which we relish the most, and thus to partake of it may prove a great mortification.

In his opinion it was a great want of politeness, when seated at table, to ask for a dish which is placed at a great

(*a*) Luke x. 8.

distance from one's place, thus betraying a mind too much preoccupied with beef and sauce; and were it done not through gluttony, but from a choice of less palatable food, it would be affectation, which can be no more separated from ostentation than smoke from fire.

One may be a glutton over a mess of cabbage, and very temperate before a dish of partridges; but to be equally indifferent to one or the other is a sign of no ordinary mortification. To partake of dainties without relishing them is by far a more difficult thing than to eat of ordinary food with gusto.

Boiled eggs were once placed before him, and as he had eaten them he continued to dip the bread in the warm water in which they had been served. The guests made merry on the Bishop's absence of mind, whereupon, being told why they laughed, he remarked: "Indeed you have done me wrong in telling me of my mistake, because I assure you I have never enjoyed sauce better than this, maybe because I am hungry; so true it is that 'hunger is the best sauce.'"

XVIII.—WHAT DISPENSATION IN FOOD CAN BE GRANTED TO SOLDIERS DURING LENT IN CASE OF NECESSITY.

Some officers, whose command was on garrison duty in my diocese during Lent, applied to me to grant leave to their soldiers to eat eggs and cheese. I never granted such dispensation but to the sick, and I felt embarrassed what answer to give, especially in a country where the fast of Lent is so strictly observed, that peasants would be scandalized if any one had a dispensation to use butter. I then dispatched a courier, who was often employed to carry messages to and fro between our blessed man and myself, our residences being only eight leagues apart. The Bishop sent me the following reply in writing:—

"I admire the faith and piety of those good centurions who have applied to you with a request which is well worthy to be entertained, inasmuch as it is a subject of edification not to the synagogue but to the church, and I think that it should not only be granted but even extended. Grant them leave to eat eggs and beef also, and not only may they use cheese, but even eat the cows that give the milk. Indeed you had great reason to consult me about what the soldiers should eat, as if the law of war and that of necessity were not the strongest of all laws, and above all exceptions. God grant they do nothing worse than to eat eggs or beef (*des oeufs ou des boeufs*), cheese or cows! If they would abstain from greater enormities, we would not hear so many complaints against them!"

XIX.—HIS AUSTERITIES, AND HOW HE HID THEM.

The blessed man knew, during his whole life, how to make use of many instruments of penance, and hide them so cunningly that even the steward who waited on him on his going to bed and rising in the morning never suspected anything of the kind. It was only at his death that the mystery was revealed.

XX.—OF A PREDICTION HE MADE TO MGR. BELLEY.

I was sparing in granting dispensations, and too often did I trouble the good prelate for advice. One day he said to me:—

"You consult me enough in reference to others, but what do you do yourself in similar circumstances?"

"I follow the dictates of my conscience, and sometimes I have recourse to the advice of my ordinary confessor."

"Why not do the same for others?"

"Because neither I nor my confessor are the Bishop of Geneva."

"Well, remember then that a day shall arrive when you will consult this same Bishop in your own behalf, but you will not give in to his decisions so easily as you do when there is question of others."

I protested that he would prove a bad prophet, because I would ever yield even a more ready compliance in what would concern myself than in what regarded another party.

"Our good St. Peter," he replied, "said precisely the same to our Divine Saviour, and you know how faithfully he kept his word. Remember, moreover, that as you begin to be indulgent to others you will become severe against yourself, for it is always the case that those who are too indulgent to themselves are very strict with others. Then the Bishop of Geneva will be more consulted in your own regard. But he will be a new Cassandra: he will speak the truth and shall not be heeded."

Oh! indeed my blessed father was a prophet that year: for he prophecied, and things happened precisely as he had foretold them.

XXI.—ON THE ADVANTAGES OF SOLITUDE.

One day we entered the cell of a Carthusian father, a man distinguished for great goodness and eminent piety, and found the two following verses of an ancient poet written on the wall:

> **Tu mihi curarum requies, tu nocte vel atra**
> **Lumen, et in solis tu mihi turba locis. (*a*)**

Thereupon blessed Francis remarked that "God is the only rest to those who have quitted the cares of the world to listen to him speaking to them in the bosom of solitude,

(*a*) "Thou art to me a rest from cares, a light in the darkest night, and a host in the most solitary places."—TIBULLUS.

and unless such attention is paid to him, solitude will become a long martyrdom, and a source of disquietude instead of a harbor of peace. Yet even those who had the cares of Martha did not, therefore, cease to enjoy, in profound rest, the good lot of Mary, provided they directed all their cares to God's service."

Then we read those words of the prophet, *This is my rest for ever and ever: here will I dwell for I have chosen it* (*a*). "It is in God," said the blessed Bishop, "and not in a little cell that we must make our choice of God, never to quit him again. Blessed, indeed, are those who dwell in such a mansion, that not only belongs to God but is God himself: they will praise him for ever and evermore!"

Another motto read thus: *One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after: that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of my life: that I may see the delight of the Lord and may visit his Temple* (*b*). "This veritable abode of the Lord is his holy will;" and respecting the above words, *Tu nocte vel atra Lumen*, he added, "Jesus being born in Bethlehem created a beautiful day at midnight: and did he not by his incarnation come to enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the region of the Valley of Death? Indeed, he is our light and our salvation, and when we shall walk through the shadows of death we shall fear nothing if he is at our side. He is the light of the world. He dwells in an inaccessible light, a light which darkness can neither extinguish nor make dim. *Et in solis tu me turba locis.* Yes, a conversation with God in solitude is of an infinitely greater value than the throng at the gates of the great men of the world, who cannot uphold their greatness but in the midst of affairs, in the pressure of importunities, and in the loss of their

(*a*) Ps. cxxxi. 14. (*b*) Ps. xxvi. 4.

rest. Miserable greatness, which is kept up at the cost of so many troubles, and yet is given up with so many regrets!"

XXII.—KNOW BOTH TO ABOUND AND TO BE IN WANT.

Our blessed Bishop admired greatly this saying of the Apostle. He was wont to say that it was a great deal more difficult to know how to *abound* than *to be in want*. A thousand perish by the hand of adversity, and ten thousand by that of prosperity. Hence Solomon cried to God. 'Give me neither beggary nor riches: give me only the necessaries of life" (*a*). An ancient writer compares moderation in the midst of riches to a bush that burns without being consumed, and him who knows how to use them to the three children in the burning furnace, who came out of it perfectly unscathed. Humility, says St. Gregory, runs great risk amid honors, chastity is imperilled by delicate living, and moderation is in great danger amidst riches. To keep one's heart equanimous in abundance as well as in distress, is an evident sign that one looks only to God both in his poverty and in his abundance: the former does not goad him, neither is he inflated by the latter. Who can kiss with an equally contented heart both hands of God, indeed he has reached a high degree of Christian perfection, and will find his salvation in the Lord.

XXIII.—HE NEVER ASKED OR REFUSED ANYTHING.

According to his favorite principle of never asking or refusing any thing, he accepted the little presents which the poor peasants offered to him, even upon the administration of sacraments. It was a touching scene to see the grateful look with which he accepted from the poor moun-

(*a*) Prov. xxx. 8.

tainers a handful of nuts, almonds, some apples, or a few eggs, or a small cheese. With the same affectionate grace he received a half-penny or a farthing. Sometimes they would ask him to offer a mass for a threepence or a fourpence, and he would fulfil the intention of it most faithfully. Whatever money he received he gave to the poor at the door of the church. But the eatables he put in his pockets, or on the mantel in his room, or he gave in care to his steward, with orders that they should be placed before him at his meals; and sometimes he repeated these words: *Thou shall eat the labor of thy hands; blessed art thou, and it shall be well with thee* (*a*). He often thought of what St. Paul says about manual labor, and he quoted Job's saying, *Man is born unto labor, and the bird to fly* (*b*). It was also a witty saying of his that could man live without work, and woman bring forth without labor, they would have gained their cause against God.

XXIV.—RECREATION A MEANS TO RAISE ONE'S HEART TO GOD.

He never took any recreation of his own accord, but only to oblige others. There was no garden connected with the two houses he occupied during his episcopate. He never took a walk except courtesy required it, or he was ordered by his physician, with whose orders he ever complied most faithfully.

St. Charles Borromeo, than whom a prelate more austere with himself never lived, would not allow any time for conversation after dinner, and made it a rule to withdraw on the plea that a Bishop with so heavy a charge on his shoulders could not afford even a short hour to be devoted

(*a*) Psalm cxxvii. 2.

(*b*) I Corinthians iv. 12. I Thessalonians ii. 9, and II, iii. 8. 10. Acts x. 34. Job v. 7.

to any other occupation but the care of his diocese. Our blessed Bishop was more human, and did not avoid a little conversation after meals. When I happened to preach for him he invariably devoted some time to recreate me after the sermon. He would treat me to a sail over the beautiful lake that washes the walls of Annecy, or go with me on a promenade in some of the beautiful villas which surround the lake. When he came to Belley he never refused my invitation for a little recreation, but he never asked for it. He never blamed those who devoted their time to building, or painting, or music, or hunting, or took pleasure in birds or plants. But he always made opportune and well put remarks to teach such persons to lead their inclinations to the knowledge of God. At the sight of a beautiful plant he would say, "We are the field that God himself cultivates." A fine building would draw from him such remark as, "*We* are God's own building." A well decorated church inspired him to say, "*We* are the abode of the Most High! oh! that our souls were decorated with virtues!" Flowers would make him exclaim, "When will our own flowers bring forth fruits?" Seeing a masterly painting, he said, "There is nothing so beautiful as the soul made in the image of God!"

Walking once through a garden, he remarked, "O! when will our soul be thus well planted with flowers and laden with fruits of exquisite beauty? When will it be like a choice garden, well fenced, to keep out everything that may displease the heavenly gardener?"

As he stood before a fountain he remarked, "When shall we have our souls filled with waters sallying forth high up into life eternal? How long shall we give up the head-fountain of life to dig cisterns of wasteful waters? When shall we take copious and healthy draughts at the fountains of the Saviour?"

At the view of a fine valley—"It is pleasant and fertile because well moistened with water. Thus the waters of Divine grace flow into an humble soul, and abandon in their dryness, like the peak of the mountains, the souls of the proud."

I have heard him often, within sight of high mountains, repeat those beautiful sentiments of the psalms which refer to the summit of mountains, and to the hill-tops (*a*).

A tree reminded him of the words of our Savior, *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit* (*b*). In a word, lakes and rivers, mountains and hills, all things in nature, or made by the hand of man, were to him like so many steps by which his heart and soul ascended to God.

XXV.—ON THE DEVOTION TO OUR BLESSED LADY.

Born within the Octave of the Assumption B.V.M., the 21st of August, 1567, he ever cherished the remembrance of this circumstance with special affection. From his earliest days he loved Mary most tenderly, and in imitation of her, and under her motherly auspices, he vowed perpetual virginity. On the feast of her Immaculate Conception he was consecrated Bishop, and received those extraordinary spiritual favors of which mention is made in his life. Often have I heard him preach on the glories of Our Lady, and in a style which only the sweetness of his heart could command. He was very industrious in inspiring the hearts of his spiritual children with the most tender sentiments of devotion towards her. He was also very careful to lead the feelings of this devotion within the proper channel, always directing its acts to the love and honor of God, whom we honor and love in our affection

(*a*) Psalm cxx. 1. Ib. cxii. 18. Isaiah ii. 2. Psalm cxlviii. 9.
(*b*) Matthew vii. 18.

and veneration for Mary, even as he says in his Treatise on the Love of God, that "Who is anxious to please God and our Blessed Lady does well, very well indeed; but who should wish to please Our Lady as much as, or more than, God, would become guilty of an unpardonable inordination."

XXVI.—HE COULD NEVER SAY "NO."

In his last journey to Paris, where he remained about eight months, he was so eagerly sought for that he had to preach almost every day, in consequence of which he fell dangerously ill. His friends anxiously warned him that he drew too largely on his own strength, and imperilled his health. But he replied that those whose duty it was to be the light of the world should, like torches, be consumed in enlightening others.

Some said to him that he rendered the Word of God too cheap, the world generally valuing only that which is rare. Moreover, it being so easy for all to see the moon, no one cared to rise betimes and see the sun, which, after all, is a far more precious light.

"Well, then," replied the good Bishop, "we shall appoint a vicar to give refusals in our name. For, being, as we are by virtue of that same WORD which I preach, debtors to all, and therefore in duty bound not only to lend, but to give ourselves to all who seek us, and true charity never consulting its own interests but God's and our neighbor's, how could I turn away and refuse those who apply to me? Besides its being uncourteous, it appears to me as very much against charity. In truth, we should become like those two great saints, one of whom would allow his name to be blotted out of the Book of Life for his brethren's sake, and the other hoped to become, for the same reason, anathema, and be separated from Jesus Christ, which amounts to the same thing."

All this was but a practical application of his leading principle of "Neither asking nor refusing." I can say this much of my own experience, that I never made an honest request of him and met with a refusal; and should he happen to decline, his refusal was even more honest than my request, even in my own judgment. His refusals were more gracious than the most condescending compliance received from any one. But no one was ever refused by him in a reasonable request.

XXVII.—OF HIS TERRIBLE TEMPTATIONS.

Of all temptations none is so formidable as that which regards the predestination of one's soul. God, who had destined our Saint to be a director of souls, permitted that he should be most rudely tempted on that point, that he might afterwards feel great compassion for others. On completing his studies in Paris, at the age of sixteen, the evil spirit harassed his mind with the thought that he was lost forever. The assault was so terrible that he could find no rest, could take no food, pined away, and was reduced to a skeleton. His tutor, who witnessed the pitiful state to which he was reduced, often entreated him to disclose the source of his troubles, but he was possessed by one of those demons that are called dumb, for the reason that they will not allow their victim to reveal their own miseries. He was at the same time deprived of all light and consolation from above; yet he remained firm in his fidelity to God, which fidelity stood to him like a buckler, against which fell powerless all the fiery darts of the infernal enemy The sweet joys of his past intercourse with God were now most vividly remembered by him, and added more torment to his troubled soul. Had it, then, been a vain hope which he had formerly entertained of being one day happy in God's company? Shall he never see the taber-

nacles of God's own mansions? In such torments was his soul excruciated for a whole month. His days were filled with the most bitter of trials; and his nights he spent in vigils of much weeping and desolation.

At last he entered a church one day to pour his heart's grief before the Lord, and he cried for mercy. He knelt before an altar of Our Blessed Mother, and begged of her to intercede for him with her Divine Son, that if he was doomed to be eternally separated from Him, he might at least be vouchsafed the happiness of loving him with his whole heart in this life. Bathed in tears, and in the agony of his soul, he repeated the beautiful and touching prayer of St. Bernard—"Remember, O most pious Virgin Mary! that no one ever had recourse to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, without obtaining relief. Confiding, then, on thy goodness and mercy, I cast myself at thy sacred feet, and do most humbly supplicate thee, O Mother of the Eternal Word! to adopt me as thy child, and to take upon thyself the care of my salvation. O let it not be said, my dearest Mother, that I have perished where no one ever found but grace and salvation."

Hardly had he uttered the last words, when God was pleased, through the intercession of Our Blessed Lady, to restore peace to his troubled soul, and he was suddenly and instantly filled with an abundance of consolation and sweet joy.

It was wonderful how the dreadful struggle and glorious victory, the deep darkness and sudden light, the storm and the calm, enabled him afterwards to teach souls how to steer their course in similar circumstances. Above all he encouraged them to preserve a steady confidence in Her whose powerful intercession will avail us as effectually as an army in array of battle.

PART FIFTH

I.—ABOUT MODESTY.

His unsurpassed love of holy purity could not bear the least act or word that might tarnish its candor; he called it "the beautiful and white virtue of a soul." He compared it to a most polished mirror from which the faintest breath would take away the power of reflecting an image. "See that lily," he said once, "it is the symbol of purity; it preserves its whiteness and sweetness even amidst briars and thorns, but touch it, or press its leaves ever so little, and it will fade and give an intolerable smell." Accordingly, he was opposed to all plays with hands; they may not be a violation of decorum, and may not wither the virtue of purity, but they will imperil, or at least hurt it.

I.—THE BISHOP LOSES A RING OF GREAT VALUE.

On the occasion of the marriage of Christine of France with the Duke of Piedmont, in 1619, he accompanied the Cardinal of Savoy to Paris. *Madame* held our Saint in great veneration, and urged him to accept the dignity of her Almoner, and he complied with the request on condition that the new charge should not interfere with his residence, which he regarded of divine right. He returned with her to Turin, and after a few days he started for his See, leaving in his place the Bishop of Chalcedon, his brother and coadjutor. On parting, the young Duchess prevailed on him to accept an episcopal ring, on which a diamond of rare value was set. Making his journey on horseback

through the Alps, he happened to take off his glove, and in so doing he unawares drew off the ring and lost it. On arriving at the hotel he became aware of the loss; he did not experience the least anxiety; on the contrary, he blessed God for being thus rid of the danger of vanity, and because some poor person might find it, and thereby make a little fortune that would place the finder out of need for life. But so it happened that the ring was sometime after found by some one who did not know its value, and showed it in a village where the loss was known, and it was thus returned to the Bishop, who had already forgotten the accident, and who most amply rewarded the lucky finder.

III.—HIS SPIRIT OF MORTIFICATION.

I once had a very nice dish prepared for him whilst he was staying at my house, but I noticed that he laid the dainty food aside on his plate, and partook of a coarser kind; whereupon I said: "I have you now! what of the evangelical order, *Eat such things as are set before you?*"

He replied with great *naivete:* "Don't you know I have a stomach as strong as a hard-working peasant? Only rough and hard food will nourish me; these delicacies do not support me."

"Dear father," I replied, "this is one of your tricks; by such shifts you disguise your austerities."

"In truth," answered he, "I mean no deceit, and I speak with candor Yet, to be even more explicit and candid, I shall not deny that I do not feel the difference between delicate and common food. I could not judge what wine is the best; I could not discern the different flavors. We people of Savoy enjoy a glass of wine without troubling ourselves about the brand. We sit at table not so much for the sake of satisfying sensuality as to nourish

our bodies. I take that which I know will nourish me, and will best agree with me. We all know that we must eat to live, and not live to eat, that is not to make a choice of savory morsels, and busy our minds about the difference and variety of dishes. However, to do honor to your good cheer, give me time and I will please you. After laying a good foundation with this nourishing and common food, I shall not neglect to cover it with a coating of the dainty things which you take so much pains in procuring for me."

What a number of virtues practiced in these few traits! Sincerity, truth, simplicity, temperance, condescension, amiability, prudence, and equality. The soul that is prompted by grace never does anything at random. God acts through his grace, and his works are always perfect, and always crowned with his glory. And so it is said: *Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God* (a).

IV.—OF THE MARKS OF SANCTIFYING GRACE.

Nothing pains the soul that truly loves God so much as the uncertainty whether he truly loves her; for no one knows of a certainty (except by a special revelation) whether one is worthy of love or hatred. Yet St. Thomas affords some marks by which we may be directed in this knowledge:

The *first* is to feel no reproval of being guilty of a mortal sin, at least unconfessed.

The *second*, that when one finds his delight in God, and what pleases God, and is directed to his service, becomes one's pleasure, certainly that person pleases God, and God pleases him; and so much so that He endeavors to please him in everything, even as he said, I love those who love me.

(a) I Cor. x. 31.

The *third*, when the creature, compared with the Creator, loses all our esteem, even, as it is indicated in the Gospel, unto the name of hatred. *Whoever*, says Jesus Christ, *does not hate his father, his mother, and his own soul*, to wit, his life, *cannot be my disciple.*

Yet, it seems to me, our blessed Bishop counselled better means wherewith to relieve those who suffer from this anguish.

In the first place, such one should visit, with the lamp of close examination, the Jerusalem of his soul, and see whether there exists, in its inmost, a firm and invariable determination of never offending God mortally and deliberately; for in this consists our perfect union with the will of God, who breathes towards us only grace and sanctification.

In the second place, we must have a firm and persistent wish of loving God; and when Blessed Francis said, 'persistent and firm', he meant an efficacious desire, not that imperfect will, which is called *velleity*.

V.—OBEY THE POWERS.

On the occasion that the Duke of Savoy had obtained permission, from the Holy See, to levy taxes on Church property (being distressed for money), Blessed Francis assembled all those among his clergy who were possessed of ecclesiastical benefices, and was mortified to find that there existed little disposition with some of them to comply with the wishes of both their Sovereign and the Pope "What, gentlemen?" he exclaimed, with some astonishment, "is it for us to find excuses when both Sovereigns have spoken their will? Is it our part to probe their reasons and ask them, why do you do so? We are wont, indeed, to acquiesce in the decrees of the Sovereign; aye, to the sentence of minor courts, for they are placed above us to

give judgment on those issues in which we may join with one another, and we do not scrutinize the motive of their judgment, so that when they say 'There is cause for it,' we are satisfied, and say no more. And yet in this case, when two oracles have spoken, and two oracles who are accountable to God alone, we presume to question their motives, as if we intended to stand inquisitors over them! For my part, I must say that I neither partake of your sentiments, nor can I approve them. Verily, we are very far from the perfection of those Christians, lay persons to boot, to whom St. Paul said: You saw with joy your goods taken from you, because you knew that you possessed other riches far more excellent and imperishable. Now, do I need telling you that he alludes to an unjust despoilment of all their goods? whereas you are called upon only to give up a small portion of your earthly goods to relieve the father of your country, our good Prince, to whose zeal we owe the re-establishment of Catholicity in the bailiwick of Chablais, and whose worse enemies are those who oppose our Christian profession.

"Is not our order the one that stands foremost in the states of Christian Princes? Is it not meet that we should contribute our goods, as well as our prayers, to the defence of our altars, of our lives, and of our security, while the people, high and low, pour their life-blood on the battle-field, and give all they have for the same purpose? Remember the past wars, and beware lest your ingratitude and rebelliousness plunge you again into greater horrors!"

He enforced this reasoning by his example, and he taxed his revenue so heavily that none dared ever more to complain, but were shamed into compliance.

It was thus that he obeyed, and taught others how to obey, mighty in words and deeds, like Gideon, who said unto his followers: *What ye shall see me do, do ye the same.*

VI.—THE EXCELLENCE OF VOWS

Undoubtedly, a fast performed after a vow is more meritorious than that which is observed without it; for, as St Thomas says:

1st. A vow is an act of religion very noble among moral virtues, and in its own nature far more excellent than the act of fasting, and hence the merit of the virtue of religion added to the merit of fasting, greatly increases the worth and perfection of a fast.

2nd. He who fasts from a vow, gives not only the fruit of fasting, but the tree also, that is the will determined and bound by the vow.

3rd. A vow adding a strict obligation to the act of fasting, binds furthermore the will, and renders it more determined, persevering, and firm, in the performance of the act.

4th. Add that one good added to another, necessarily increases its value.

Yet, a fast observed without vow, but with greater love, is a better and more perfect act than that which is the result of a vow, but is prompted by less love; for charity is the virtue which gives all our acts merit before God. Those, who bind themselves with vows to perform acts of virtue, should do so in love and for love, lest they lose their worth.

VII.—BLESSED FRANCIS' PUNCTUALITY.

He averred that our fidelity to God is shown especially in small things. He would say: "A careful economizer of pennies will take good care of dollars." And he acted accordingly. He was the most punctual of men. The same punctuality at the public ceremonies and services in the choir and church, as at his private devotions and

recitation of the office in his room. He was also punctually observant of the civilities of life. Once I remonstrated with him for the extreme deference he observed towards me: "And what do you think of Jesus Christ, whom I honor in your person?" was the reply.

Above all, he urged upon me the necessity of studying well the ceremonial of Bishops. He said: "It is for the pastors, who are the salt of the earth, and the light of the world, to give good example in all things." He often repeated these words of St. Paul: *Let all things be done becomingly, and in order* (a).

VIII.—HOW LITTLE HE CARED FOR THE WORLD S GOODS, AND OF HIS ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS.

He was never heard to make the least complaint because the people of Geneva had confiscated almost all the revenues of his episcopal See and Chapter; so little did he care for the things of this earth! He was wont to say that it happens with the goods of the Church as with one's beard, the more you shave it the stronger it grows. The Apostle *had nothing*, and yet *possessed all things*, whereas, when ecclesiastics grasp too much, they come to nothing. His only anxiety was that those benighted Genevese should enjoy the light of truth, which burns only in *the* church. He often exclaimed, Give me their souls, and keep all the rest! and he always spoke of that city as his "poor" or "dear Geneva," albeit they were in rebellion against him.

Sometimes he said to me: "Would to God those people took even the little they have left me, but would give us access to their unfortunate city, even so much as the Catholics can have to Rochelle!—a little chapel to have divine service in! you would see all those sinners come, within short time, to their senses, and how gladdened we

(a) I. Cor. xiv. 40.

would be at their return to the Church." He always cherished this hope. He never heard the Psalm cxxvi., to wit, *By the river of Babylon*, &c., but he thought of his poor Geneva, the See of all his predecessors, not that he cared for their wealth and pomp, but because he felt pained at the loss of so many souls. When he read his office in private, or with his chaplain, those words always drew tears from his eyes.

He remarked that "Henry VIII., who had formerly so well written against the errors of Luther as to deserve the title of Defender of the Faith, and afterwards fell through lust, and in his fall, dragged after him a whole kingdom, desired, at the point of death, to be reconciled with the church, but found an unsurmountable difficulty, arising from the impossibility of returning the goods of the church which he had distributed among his favorites, and he was heard to exclaim: 'And shall, then, a handful of earth and dust rob heaven of so many souls!' Alas! the part of every Christian, and especially of an ecclesiastic, is to observe the law of God; and the Lord is the portion of his inheritance and of his chalice."

IX.—HIS PATIENCE IN SICKNESS.

He suffered the most intense pains with a sweetness and equanimity truly wonderful, never complaining, always perfectly resigned to the will of God. He never expressed regret because his sickness prevented him from doing service to God and his neighbor. "God knows better," he would say, "than I do, what is the best for me; let him do as he chooses, he is the Lord; let him do what is most pleasing to his divine will. O God! let thy will be done, not mine. Yes, my heavenly Father, I will it, because it has been found good in thy presence. I will it so, O my Lord, and may thy law and thy will be for ever engraven in my heart."

When asked whether he would take medicine or a little broth, or any other remedy, he invariably answered: "Do with the sick as you think best; God has put me in the hands of physicians." It was an admirable instance of obedience and simplicity. He honored God in the physicians, he knew that medicines were the creatures of God, who commanded that the physicians should be honored; and honor implies obedience (*a*).

He gave an exact statement of his sickness, neither exaggerating it by excessive complaints, nor underrating it with dissimulation. He called the first cowardice, the latter insincerity. Even when suffering from very acute pains, the calm resignation of his soul was transparent through his countenance, sweet and serene.

X.—ABOUT SERVANTS.

The blessed Prelate never spoke a hard word to his domestics, and should they commit any fault, his way of correcting them was so devoid of any sting that it only increased their love for him.

Discussing with him one day, the proper system to deal with servants, I remarked that familiarity engendered contempt: "Yes," said he, "a familiarity improper, rude, and reprehensible, but not that which is courteous, cordial, and virtuous, for such will only proceed from love; and love engenders its like, and true love is never separated from esteem, and respect for the person beloved, inasmuch as true love is always based on esteem."

"But, then, must we leave them to themselves, and allow them the control of things?"

"By no means. But I insist, that if charity is the mistress of the heart, she will, indeed, guide every thing with

(*a*) Eccl. xxxviii.

the rules of discretion, prudence, justice, and moderation, as well as of humility, patience, and amiability. We should never forget that domestics are our neighbors, and humble as they are, charity commands us to love them as ourselves. Let us, then, love these good neighbors, who are so near to us, live under the same roof with ourselves, and on our own food, and let us treat them as we treat ourselves, or rather, as we would wish to be treated, were we in their place and situation; and there you have the true system to follow with servants. Yet we must never let their faults pass unnoticed, or spare correction when needed, but at the same time, we should acknowledge the good they do to us. It will be well, for the purpose of encouraging them, to shew them, from time to time, that we are satisfied with their service, that we have confidence in them, and that we look upon them as brothers, or friends whose wants we wish to have provided for, and their welfare promoted. And as a puff of wind swelling the sails of a vessel propels it to a far greater distance than a hundred strokes of the oar, so a word of friendship and an expression of good will obtain more service from a domestic than a hundred commands conveyed in harsh and overbearing tones."

XI.—HIS CONDESCENSION.

To yield courteously to the whims of others, and a gentle but manly forbearance of their faults, were cherished virtues of his, and he earnestly recommended their practice. Often has he said to me: "How much easier it is to yield to others, than to force them into a compliance with our whims and opinions! The human mind is really a mirror which readily reflects all the colors that are placed before it. But one must be on his guard not to do like the chameleon which reflects all colors, except the white; for a condescension, which is not blended with candor and purity, is

a dangerous one, and we cannot be on our guard enough against it. It is proper to feel compassion towards a sinner, for the purpose of drawing him out of the mire in which he wallows, and not to leave him there to rot and die. It is a cruel wrong that of seeing our neighbor a prey to the misery of sin, and yet not to give him a helping hand, with a gentle, but frank remonstrance. We should be condescending in all things, but only as far as the altar, to wit: in every thing that is not an offence to God. Those are the boundaries of true condescension.

"I do not say that a sinner shall be reprimanded on all occasions. A charitable prudence dictates that we should wait for the time when he is prepared to receive the remedy adapted to his malady. A turbulent zeal, not guided by moderation and science, will cause more destruction than edification. There are some who actually effect no good whatever, because they wish to do too much, and spoil whatever they undertake to mend. They are fairly hated, according to the old proverb: 'Who runs fast will stumble.' There must be judgment in correction as well as in condescension."

In none have I ever witnessed so much condescension and forbearance as in our blessed Bishop. Yet, when he had taken his time, and proper measures, his blows fell at the right moment, and for a purpose, and with so much wisdom, force, and gentleness, that nothing could resist them.

XII.—HIS SELF-CONTROL.

He has candidly acknowledged that "love and anger" were the two passions which cost him the most to conquer. He overcame the former by skilful manœuvres and the latter by dint of violence, or as he was wont to say, "he had taken hold of his heart with both hands."

By a manœuvere he changed the object of his affections; for as the soul cannot live without some sort of love, the secret lies in finding an object pure and holy. Our will is like our love. If we love the earth, St. Augustine says, we are earthly, but we are celestial if we love heaven; nay, we become godlike by participation if we love God. Hosea, speaking of idolaters, says: "*they became abominable as those things which they loved* (*a*). All our Saint's writings breathe love, but a love which is holy in its expressions, so chaste, and at the same time, so affectionate, that they convey their own justification—*pure words . . . justified in themselves . . . sweeter than honey and honeycomb.*"

As regards the passion of anger, which was very strong in him, he combated it, face to face, with so much energy, force and perseverance, that at the autopsy of his body the gall was found transformed into little stones, and the physicians could give no other explanation of the phenomenon, but the uninterrupted struggle which he had to endure in order to curb the vehement and impetuous passion of anger.

(*a*) ix. 10.

PART SIXTH.

I.—ABOUT DUPLICITY.

Our blessed Bishop reputed a great sin against God and man that of disguising one's interior by a false countenance. Such persons he qualified as double, masked, counterfeited, and dangerous. Such *have deceitful lips and with a double heart have they spoken* (*a*), and of such it is said: "*May the Lord destroy all deceitful lips* (*b*). He loved to see a well composed exterior, that should correspond to an even better regulated interior, that the cause should always be more excellent than its effect; it being the root from which must spring all the beauty of flowers and leaves, and the goodness of the fruit of a tree. Then, as the interior gives existence to the exterior, so will the latter, in its turn, nourish and preserve the former, like the fire which, indeed, produces those ashes by which it is afterwards even nursed and maintained.

Indeed, a tree without leaves would be shorn of its ornament, but it would also be deprived of the benefit which the fruits derive from them for the protection they afford against the ardor of the sun; and thus the exterior adds an ornament to the interior, and will greatly help the preservation of the heart.

Although the part of Mary, which is the type of the interior, is very good, that of Martha, typifying the exterior, has its own particular good points; and when these two sisters agree together, in the service of Jesus

(*a*) Ps. xi. 3. (*b*) Ib. 4.

Christ, everything is in peace and perfect order in the economy of the Christian soul.

II.—ABOUT ONE'S INTENTION.

The question has been asked whether, having performed a good action without any intention, it can afterwards be applied to some good purpose. The holy Francis answers the question thus: "Should at any time the exterior act precede the interior prompting feeling, in consequence of habit, let the feeling follow it as close as possible. If, *e. g.*, before showing due respect to my superiors, I have not elicited the interior act of reverence which should prompt it, let it at least accompany, or follow close to, the exterior expression of submission."

Certainly, there is no reason why we should not, by a subsequent application, rectify or direct our intention, the same as by the penance which follows our sin, we can be re-admitted to the grace of God, and wash our sin in the waters of repentance. If the spirit of compunction and contrition has the power to destroy evil, and to make grace abound where sin abounded before, why cannot the spirit of grace change good into better, and lift towards heaven a good act which crept upon earth from the want of a lofty aim? If by heating we can straighten a bent bar of iron, why shall we not be able to straighten a crooked intention with the help of divine love?

III.—ON ACTIVE AND CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE.

It has been objected that those Sisters, who confine their lives to prayer and contemplation—a sweet and easy life indeed—cannot merit before God so much as those who devote themselves to the functions, arduous and difficult, of an active life. If by "merit" we mean the excellence of either life, it is evident, at first sight, that the contempla-

tive is far more excellent than the active life, even according to the judgment given by our Saviour upon Martha and Mary, praising the latter as having *chosen the best part.* Our perfection and happiness depend upon our union with God, and certainly a life of contemplation unites us more intimately with Him than one of action, although the latter, owing to the actual and pressing necessities of this life, has many advantages over the former.

Yet, if by "merit" we mean that which corresponds to a reward in heaven, then, even in reference to the substantial reward of beatitude, we must look to charity as securing the principal portion of it, and say that those who will act or contemplate with the most charity, will have the most merit, and accordingly a greater recompense in heaven.

But blessed Francis will give a more direct decision: "Let Martha be active but assume no control over Mary; let Mary be contemplative, but allow her not to despise Martha: for surely will Our Lord take the side of her who is censured."

IV.—PERFECTION CONSISTS NOT IN DOING MUCH BUT IN DOING WELL.

Our blessed Bishop was ever earnest in deprecating bustling manners, which he qualified as the capital enemies of true devotion. "Better," he would say, "to do little and well, than to undertake a multitude of things and execute them imperfectly.

"Our advance in perfection does not consist in the multiplicity of things which we may do, but in the fervor and purity of intention with which we perform them."

Hence, *first*, our progress depends not on the multiplicity of our actions, but on the fervor of holy charity. *Second*, one good action performed with great fervor, is more agreeable to God than many performed with tepidity and

remissness. *Third*, the purity of intention enhances the merit of a good action, for the end gives value to the act, and the purer and nobler is that end, the more exquisite is our faith. Now, the higher of all our aims is the glory of God.

In conversation one should "speak *little* and *good*"—it was our Saint's motto. In our actions he wished us not to undertake too much, but that the little which is done were done with a great deal of perfection, according to the proverb, *Soon enough if well done.*

V.—A SENTIMENT OF GREAT HUMILITY.

He said one day to me, "I do not know why they call me the founder of the Daughters of the Visitation. Indeed, I am not the man of such resources as to institute a new Order, as if we had not plenty of monastic institutions. I fear I have only done what I wished to undo, and undone what I wished to do."

"But what do you mean?" said I.

"The fact is, I only intended to establish a house in Annecy wherein could be gathered maids and widows, neither professed nor cloistered, and whose duty should be to visit and relieve the sick, who are destitute, and practice works of mercy both spiritual and corporal. But instead we have an order living in cloisters, with vows, and under the rule of St. Augustine, a manner of life utterly incompatible with the former design, which they have followed only a few years, so that the title of Visitation belongs to them no more. Hence I am rather their godfather than their institutor, inasmuch as my institute has been abandoned. To the Archbishop of Lyons we owe, after God, the change, and he should properly be called *the* founder. I have, it is true, framed their rules, but it was in compliance with an order from the Holy See, by whom I was

ordered to erect into a monastery the house of Annecy, after the plan whereof others have been established in various places." He often quoted and praised the conduct of John d'Avila, who, having formed a congregation of secular priests, no sooner he heard of the institution of the Company of Jesus then he abandoned his undertaking, deeming St. Ignatius' plan superior to his own, and meeting all the wants of the times. Nor was he less sparing of his praises in reference to St. Ignatius, of whom history records that although he loved his company above everything on earth, still were he to see it dissolved like salt in water, one-quarter of an hour in prayer would reconcile him with the catastrophe. And thus even our blessed father, when his institution was threatened with dissolution at its very beginning, in consequence of the severe illness of that excellent woman who was its foundation-stone, exclaimed: "Be it so! God will be pleased with our good will, as he was with the obedience of Abraham. The Lord had inspired us with great hopes; the Lord has taken them away—let his holy name be praised."

VI.—ON THE PERFECTION OF ONE'S STATE OF LIFE.

He was wont to say that the most serious duty in the life of a true Christian is to endeavor to perfect himself every day more and more in that state of life in which one may be placed. Now the perfection of one's state consists in that the means be directed to their proper end, and those be employed, which are supplied by our condition in life, to advance in charity, in which alone consists the true and essential perfection of Christianity, and in the absence of which nothing can be perfect. In fact if that is perfect which wants none of its own parts,—and no virtue can attain its aim, which is the glory of God, but through charity,—it becomes evident that no virtue can be perfect

without charity, and consequently a virtue devoid of charity can never aid us to attain the perfection proper of our state in life. Above all then let us have charity, which is the bond of perfection, and at the same time unites in itself all other virtues, and leads them to their true centre, which is God and his glory.

VII.—ABOUT IMITATING OTHERS.

He often advised to read the lives of those saints who have lived in circumstances similar to our own, in order to imitate them. The heroic virtues of the saints are like so many perfect models, and those who copy them will attain a degree of excellence according as they approach the perfection of the models. Whereupon I remarked to him one day that "I watched him closely, and observed all his acts with so much attention, that he should be on his guard how he acted before me, for I would imitate his every action, and I would deem them all virtuous."

"It is a great pity," he replied, "that friendship as well as love is blindfolded, and we are unable to distinguish the faults from the virtues of the person beloved. What a pity! I shall live near you as if on hostile ground, and I shall needs look upon your eyes and ears as so many spies. Yet I feel gratified for your speaking thus to me, for a man forewarned is forearmed. It is tantamount to say: Child of man, be on thy guard and walk straight, for both God and man keep their eyes on thee? An enemy will watch to find fault and to do injury; whereas friends should indeed keep watch on one another, but from a far different motive—that is, to tell each other their shortcomings, and to correct them.

"Do not take it badly, but you are cruel to me: for not only you refuse me a helping hand to pick myself up when fallen, with salutary and friendly warnings, but it moreover

seems as if you meant to make me an accomplice of your faults by an unjust imitation. As for myself, God has inspired me with different feelings towards you. Indeed, I feel a jealousy in whatever regards you, and I desire so ardently to see you walking in the right path, that the least fault becomes unbearable to me: a fly on you grows in my eyes into the hugeness of an elephant, and so far from any wish to imitate you, I protest that I have to do violence to myself in putting off admonishing you to a favorable opportunity."

VIII.—ON COMMUNICATING ONE'S GOOD DEEDS.

To a Sister of the Visitation, who had enquired of him as to the best means of preserving the spirit of the order, he replied: "Keep it well guarded within the observance of its rules."

Then he continued, "You will say that some are so jealous of their institute that they will not allow it to be known outside the house. This is a superfluous jealousy, and it should be done away with; for why should we keep from our neighbor that which may do him good? I am not of this opinion, but I wish that whatever good there is in the Order of Visitation were known to all, and I have accordingly wished that your rules and constitution were printed, that by knowing them many might draw profit therefrom. Would to God that more were desirous to practice them! We would then witness a marvellous change greatly to the glory of God and benefit of their souls. Be extremely careful to preserve the spirit of the Visitation, but let not this care prevent you from sharing it in charity and simplicity with your neighbor, every one according to her ability. Fear not lest it should become dissipated by this communication, for charity never hinders any good—on the contrary it imparts perfection to all things."

IX.—ABOUT READING GOOD BOOKS.

To read with profit we should read one book at a time, and read it orderly—that is, from beginning to end. We should be guided, in our readings, both by utility and pleasure, like travellers who find a relief in their travels from the views they meet in their way. The new thoughts arising from our readings refresh the mind. Those who have no fixed reading, but skip from book to book, become soon tired of that which should be the healthiest food of the soul and a charm in life. Blessed Francis called spiritual reading the oil of the lamp of prayer. And he would quote the opinion of physicians who hold that simplicity of food preserves man's health, whereas the partaking of many dishes, as is usual at great dinners, spoils digestion. The same happens in the indiscriminate reading of spiritual works: little profit is derived from them, and more harm than good.

X.—ABOUT VIRTUE.

It is a very common error, even with spiritual persons, to imagine that they have virtues opposite to certain vices, whilst the practice of those virtues they cannot aver in their actions. It is difficult to reckon how many rest their souls on this treacherous thought, for there lies a wide distance between the acts and the habits of a virtue and the habits and acts of a vice opposite to it. To cease from doing a specified evil diminishes the vicious habit, but it is not enough for the acquirement and increase of virtue: it needs the exercise of continued acts. It is not great wonder that one should be amiable while one has no person to offer him offence or contradiction. It would be passing strange if such a person were morose and cross, with whose wishes everybody complies, and the utmost

compliance is yielded. There are certain dispositions seemingly most pleasant as long as everything round about is smiling, but *Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.* They are like live coals smouldering under ashes. St. Gregory puts it well when he says that it is not great wonder that one should be good with the good, but to be good with the wicked, to return good for evil, and address calmly and sweetly those who attack our fair names; it is something like Mount Olympus whose summit is always serene while all the elements are in convulsion around it. Our blessed Saint had a way of his own to explain all this. Said he: "The virtue of strength and the strength of virtue are never obtained in the time of peace, or when we are not tried by opposition. People are very amiable as long as they meet with no contradiction, and have not obtained their sweetness of temper sword in hand; they appear very exemplary and very edifying. But let the hour of trial arrive, and you will see them bristling up, and show that their sweetness was not a solid and strong virtue, but rather in imagination than in reality. There is a vast difference between the absence of a vice and the presence of its opposite virtue. Many appear to be truly virtuous, who, nevertheless, have no virtue at all, because they have not obtained it by any hard struggle. Often it happens that our passions are dormant and seemingly extinct, but should we neglect to make preparation to repulse them, when they happen to be roused and make an attack upon us, we would come out second best. We should be always humble, and never think that we possess virtues, because we do not commit acts opposite thereto, or, at least, are not conscious of committing.

PART SEVENTH.

I.—A PLEASANT REPLY.

It was once somewhat rudely observed to him that they saw none but women around him. "Indeed," he replied, "so it was with our Lord, and many murmured at it."

"But," replied he who had been indiscreet enough to make the remark, "I can't see why they trifle so with you, perceiving, as I do, that you do not encourage their nonsense or say much to them."

To which the holy man answered: "And do you take it for nothing to let them talk it all out? Indeed there is more need of ears to listen than of tongues to reply to them. They talk enough for themselves and for me: very probably my readiness to listen crowds them around me, for there is nothing so pleasing to a great talker as a peaceable and patient audience."

Yet the man who had so indiscreetly addressed him, not taking the hint, continued even more indiscreetly: "I have watched your confessional; for every man there is a flock of women."

Francis answered: "What can I do? This sex is inclined to piety, and hence does the church call it 'the pious female sex.' Would to God that the men, who commit so many more sins, had as much disposition towards doing penance!"

And yet the man, who had so uncouthly addressed him, held on and said with uncommon persistency: "Do you think there are more women saved than men?"

"No more joking. It is not for us to pry into the secrets of God: we are not his counsellors!'

And no more was said about it.

II.—TO A BISHOP WHO INTENDED TO LEAVE HIS DIOCESE.

A certain prelate asked the advice of our Saint about his purpose of quitting his see, even as the great St. Gregory of Nazianzum did, who left the patriarchal see of Constantinople and withdrew to his farm of Arianzum. "It is to be presumed," remarked blessed Francis, "that these Saints did not act without an especial inspiration of God: and we must never judge things by their appearance, even as we know in the present case that that Saint had to yield to violence when he quitted his see." Whereupon the prelate replied that he was frightened at the charge of so many souls for which he was responsible.

"Alas!" said blessed Francis, "what would you say, what would you do, had you a burden like mine on your shoulders? and yet I shall not trust any the less in the mercy of God.'

But the prelate urged that he was like a torch wasting away while it shed light all around, and his mind was so taken up with the affairs of his neighbors that he had hardly any time to think about his own soul.

"Exactly so," replied the blessed man, "but the affairs of your neighbor forming the largest portion of what concerns the salvation of your soul, are you not working out your own, while you are attending to theirs? Can you promote your own salvation except in advancing that of others, since you have been called for this very purpose."

Yet the prelate insisted that while he was working to secure the salvation of others he endangered his own.

But the Saint said: "Read ecclesiastical history and

the lives of the Saints, and you will find no order or condition of life that contains so many holy men as the episcopal order, nor is there any state in the church of God that affords so many means of sanctification and perfection; for the purest means of advancing in perfection is that of teaching it to others both by word and example, and this the bishops are bound to do in virtue of the position they hold. A Christian's life is a continued warfare and a struggle to obtain perfection. Now there is no state in the church requiring and imparting more perfection than that of a Bishop, and certainly it would be 'looking back' to resign one's see. Remain in the craft, aboard which God has placed you, to make your passage through life: and the journey is so short that it is not worth while to change the vessel. But if your head is dizzy whilst you sail in a large vessel, how much worse would it be with you were you to take passage in a frail boat, tossed about by the waves, I mean in a lower situation of life, in which with less work and apparently more tranquillity you would be none the less exposed to temptation."

And the other Bishop gave up his ideas of resigning.

III.—ON THE PARAMOUNT DUTY OF A BISHOP.

"A Bishop," he said to me, "is the superintendent of God's own house: this is the meaning of the word 'Bishop.' It is, then, your duty to watch and keep guard over your diocese, knowing that you are responsible to the Prince of Shepherds for all the souls entrusted to your care. Yet over two classes of persons you must exert a most vigilant care, pastors and heads of families; for from them depends all the good or evil of a parish or of a house. You know that when a baby, at its mother's breast, is ailing, the physician prescribes medicine even for the nurse, so that its virtue may affect the milk, and through the milk the child.

The people's healthy nursing in doctrine and virtue depends from the instruction and good life of the parish priests who are their immediate shepherds: they are like the green rod of Jacob, giving the sheep's wool whatever color is desired. A great deal is obtained by instruction, but far more by example, inasmuch as very few are able to understand that law in the gospel: 'All things whatsoever they shall say to you observe and do, but according to their works do ye not.'—Matth. xxiii.

"Say the same as regards fathers and mothers. From their admonitions, and far more from their example, depends the happiness of their homes.

"Your episcopal charge, then, is that of a superintendent, to keep faithful watch over those who, like Saul, are higher than the rest of the people from the shoulder and upward, who, in other words, are the heads of house or parish, because good will thence flow on those who are under them, even as Aaron's perfume which descended from his head to the hem of his garment, for you are the pastor of pastors and the father of fathers of families."

IV.—ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

Without this love the largest amount of virtue was to him but rubbish: hence he forever impressed his people with the necessity of possessing charity. But he was not satisfied with the mere habit. He always added the words of the Apostle: "Let whatever you do, do it with love." He never tired of repeating, with St. Paul, that nothing will be of avail without love; neither faith nor alms, nor science, nor the knowledge of mysteries, nor even the martyrdom of fire. Frequently has he told me that these principles cannot be inculcated enough to root them deeply in the hearts of the people; "for," he would say, "what use to run if we do not reach the goal? Alas! how many actions fail

useless because not animated by a feeling of love! And yet little thought is given to this, as if the intention was not the soul of our actions, as if God had promised to recompense works not done for his sake and referred to his honor.

"Salvation is pointed to by faith, and prepared by hope, but gained by love. Faith shows the road to the land of promise, like the cloud and the light of olden times; hope nourishes us with a manna of sweetness; but charity, like the ark of the covenant, leads us into the celestial land, promised to the true Israelites, and then we shall need no more pillar of faith to guide us, nor manna of hope for our nourishment."

In truth, as the architect shapes his work with square, rule and level in hand, so, to build the walls of the mystical Jerusalem, and render our actions living stones, we should always keep an eye to the straight line of charity, referring everything to God, according to the advice of the Apostle: *Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God* (a).

V.—ALL FROM LOVE, NOTHING BY FORCE.

This was his rule and his system of government. He has often remarked to me that those who pretend to force the will of men, practice a tyranny extremely hateful to God and men. Hence he could not bear those despotic spirits who exacted obedience at all hazards and wished to curb everything at their beckoning. "Those," said he, "who love to be feared, fear to be loved, and themselves are in more fear than the rest, for the rest fear only them, whereas they are afraid of all. *Necesse est multos timeant, quem multi timent.*"

(a) 1 Cor. x. 31.

I have often heard him say: "In the royal galley of divine love there are no convicts. The oarsmen are all volunteers!"

Accordingly, all his commands were conveyed by way of prayer and persuasion. He held in especial veneration St. Peter's saying: "*Feed the flock . . . not by constraint but willingly*" (*a*). In the spiritual direction of souls he held up the example of God and his angels, who lead us by inspirations and interior lights, remonstrance, entreaties and solicitations, all with patience and reasoning. We should, like the spouse, knock at the door of the heart and gently force admittance; should this be gained, then let us introduce salvation in a cheerful way; were it refused, let us bear the repulse with patience."

When I complained to him of the oppositions I met to the introduction of salutary measures during my visitations, he would say: "But you have an unbending disposition. You wish to advance on the wings of the wind, and you become the victim of your zeal, which, like an *ignis-fatuus*, will lead you to a precipice! Do you pretend to do more than God has done, and enslave the creatures whom he has created free? You cut right and left, as if the wills of your flock were all in your hands; yet God, who holds the hearts of all in his own hand, does not act so. He bears resistance and rebellion to his divine light, and he permits opposition to his inspirations, even to the saddening of his heart; nay, even until sheep are lost, who, by the obduracy of their impenitent hearts, heap on themselves the tempest of his wrath that will break on their heads on the day of his vengeance. But he does not, therefore, withdraw his inspirations, although his advances are rejected, and people say unto him: 'Begone, we do not wish to follow thy ways!'

(*a*) 1 Peter, v. 2.

"Our guardian angels act in this as the Lord teaches them. We abandon God in our iniquity, and yet they do not give us up. What better models after which to shape our conduct?"

VI.—ON RESIGNATION. HOLY INDIFFERENCE.

He said: "The virtue of resignation cannot be obtained without a struggle, without a spirit of submission. We prefer to live than to die; yet as it is the good pleasure of God that we should die, we acquiesce. We wish it pleased God to keep us in life, yet we die willingly, although we would even more willingly live. People die with a good will, but they would prefer to live with even a better one. This is resignation. Holy indifference is one degree higher than resignation, for it loves nought else but God's will, so much so that the heart which possesses this holy indifference cannot be influenced by anything which is not the will of God."

Thus, both resignation and holy indifference refer to the will of God manifested by what takes place, although in different ways: for the former is always associated with effort, and the latter makes no effort whatever. Yet the simple determination of attaining this two-fold perfection is superior in worth to both, inasmuch as it looks to God's will still unknown to us, and engages us to will in advance God's will, without our knowing what it may be, or having the least hint thereof.

VII.—ADMIRABLE PRESENCE OF MIND ACCOMPANIED BY GREAT HUMILITY.

A certain simple-minded and perfectly honest person came to our Saint one day, and bluntly told him that she had heard such reports about him as to make her lose all

respect for, and almost hate, him. "And I love you the more," was the blessed man's reply. "How so?" "Because you must be possessed of great candor to tell me that, and I highly esteem the virtue of candor."

"But I have spoken to you out of the true sentiments of my heart, as I felt and as I do feel now."

"And so do I, out of the true sentiments of my heart, past, present and future, as I hope in the Lord never to change them." Then the visitor, as if for the purpose of beginning a quarrel with him, told him that the cause of her dislike was his having taken the part of an apponent of hers in a very unpleasant and troublesome affair.

"You were informed correctly, and I have done so because I thought that the right was on the other side."

"But you should behave as the father of all, and not as a partisan, siding with one party to the prejudice of another."

"And do not fathers take cognizance of the quarrels of their children, judging between right and wrong? You should have learned by the verdict that the right was on the other side, in whose favor it has been asserted."

"They have done me an injustice."

"In truth, had I been one of the judges I would also have decided against you."

"Indeed, you do much towards curing me of my dislike."

"It is just what those will generally say who have lost a case. Yet when time will have brought back calmness to your spirit, you shall bless God, and the judges who are his interpreters, for having taken from you that which you could not possess with a good conscience and in justice, and then all aversion to them and to myself will cease, but this cannot be hoped until the bandage of passion is fallen from

your eyes. I pray to God that he may vouchsafe it to you in his mercy."

"Amen," replied the visitor; "but I would like to know whether you spoke sincerely when you told me that you loved me the more for what I have said."

"I have never uttered a word more in unison with the feelings of my heart; for who could help loving a soul the more for the frankness with which she has unburdened herself of the weight that has pressed upon her heart, and who, by laying her wounds open so plainly, renders the cure thereof so easy. Your behavior is not only amiable but even heroic in my estimation, and it bespeaks a courage uncommon, indeed. You do not act like the worldling that puts on a fine countenance, and fosters a bad heart." And he went on unfolding the bad points of her case, and the reasons for an adverse judgment so forcibly, that she felt constrained to praise God and acknowledge that the loss had been her gain.

"Nevertheless," she added, "I feel I have lost that great esteem I before entertained for you, for I remember the time when I looked upon you as a Saint."

"And you were wrong then. I assure you in all truth, and not from a motive of humility, that I am very far from deserving the good opinion with which my friends overrate me. But, in truth, they wish me to be what they say I am, because they ardently wish I were such. Yet, now that you do not hold me in such good opinion as before, I even love you more, for you are, with me, thinking of me ever as I do myself. Those who flatter me with their praises deceive both me and themselves, because they side against truth, and they expose me to the danger of presumption and of losing my soul; whereas whoso underrates me acts as I should act, teaches me humility with a practical lesson, and leads me in the path of salvation, for

it is written that God will save the humble of heart. In a word, I like better to be wounded by being told the truth than by being kissed in flattery. The just shall admonish and correct me in charity, but the sinner shall not pour perfume and ointment over my head. See, then, why I must, and in fact do, love you more, because you do me more good than others."

VIII.—ABOUT A RECONCILED ENEMY.

He never approved the saying, "we must not trust a reconciled enemy." The contrary is more in accordance with truth, in his opinion. He was wont to say that "fallings out" between friends were only the means to draw closer the bonds of friendship, even as the forgers make use of water to set their forges in a blaze. And he added that it was a well known fact that the callosity formed over the fracture of a bone is so strong that it will never break again on the same spot.

Indeed, whoso become reconciled will work, maybe unconsciously, to render their friendship more firm, the offender by avoiding further offence, and atoning for the former ones, and the offended by endeavoring, in true generosity, to bury the past in oblivion.

IX.—ON THE MODESTY OF THE EYES.

Mention was once made of a lady, a countrywoman and a relation of his, and it was remarked that she was the handsomest of the handsome. The Bishop looked at me and said: "I heard great many say so."

"Why," said I, "you see her often, she is a near relation of yours, and you speak from hearsay!"

But he replied with a most admirable simplicity, "True, I have seen her often and spoken to her many times, but I have never looked at her."

"Dear Father, how can one see another without one looking at the other?

"See now, this relation of mine belongs to that sex that we must see without looking. We see them in a superficial and general glance, to know the difference of the person whom we address, but we must be on our guard not to put on them a fixed eye or a steadfast look."

This reminded me of Job, who had made a covenant with his eyes not to think of females. I thought also of what is related of Alexander the Great, who would not see the wife of the Persian monarch, whom he held captive with her husband, nor the ladies of their suite, saying that Persian women made the eyes ache. Remarkable trait in a pagan hero, who feared lest his lust might make him lose the honor of his victories. St. Ambrose, in a book of excellent advices to virgins, exhorts them to keep a strict guard on their eyes lest thieves, that is bad thoughts and wicked desires, might not enter through those avenues. "Let your eyes," says the holy Doctor, "never gaze on any man in particular," or, as our blessed Bishop had it, "see without looking."

On another occasion it was remarked in his presence that a certain nobleman had married a lady on account of her beauty. "I heard," said he, "that she is very *specieuse* (Anglice, *fine?*) but I have never seen her."

"You mean," I replied, "that you have never looked at her."

"No, indeed," answered he with a smile; "I have no recollection of ever having seen her."

"But why do you use the word *specieuse?* Perhaps it is good Savoyard, but certainly it is not good French."

"No, it is neither Savoyard nor French, but it is clerical. When persons of our profession speak of the sex, we should never use the words 'beautiful,' 'handsome,' or

'beauty.' They do not become our lips, inasmuch as they betray some judgment rendered by our eyes, and it is but proper we should employ less qualifying and more modest words."

X.—THE MAGDALENE AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS.

The holy Prelate had a predilection for the picture of the Magdalene at the foot of the cross. He sometimes called it his book and his library. "Oh!" he exclaimed once looking at a painting I had in my house at Belley, "Oh! that penitent had the best of the bargain! She shed tears over the feet of Jesus Christ, and lo! now those feet poured over her heart that blood which washes away all stains of sin." Then he added, "We should cherish those little virtues which grow at the foot of the cross, because they are bedewed with the Son's own blood; such are patience, kindness, condescension, tenderness for our neighbors, suavity of manners, good nature, cordiality, candor and the like. Such virtues are like violets which grow better in the freshness of the shade, are best nourished by the dew, and, however humble and modest, diffuse all around a sweet odor."

"But, are there not also virtues which grow on the top of the cross?"

"Great many; and they are very refulgent if they are accompanied by a great deal of charity. Such are prudence and justice, munificence, zeal, liberality, authority, chastity, exterior mortification, obedience, contemplation, perseverance, contempt of riches and the like. All are anxious to taste them, because they are, as it were, of a superior quality, held in more esteem, and they will even render us more illustrious and remarkable. Yet we should love their excellent quality only because God loves them more than the

rest, and they afford us opportunities of loving God in a more eminent degree."

XI.—HE RESOLVES TO LET HIS INSTITUTE FALL AT ITS BEGINNING.

The extraordinary woman whom he had chosen for a foundation stone of his institute fell sick and her life was despaired of. The good Bishop received the news with his wonted imperturbability, and instantly resigned himself to the will of God; yet he perceived at once, that if Lady Chantal died, all that had been so far done would vanish, and hardly could another woman be found endowed with such qualities as to be intrusted with the foundation of the Order of Visitation. But he only remarked, "God will be satisfied with our will; he knew our weakness, and that we would not be able to travel the whole way alone."

However, simultaneously with this heroic act of resignation the lady recovered, and was restored to a state of health, stronger than ever, has lived twenty-eight years, and has advanced and brought the work of the Visitation to the state of perfection which it enjoys this day (*a*). Indeed, the works of God are no less marvellous than perfect.

Blessed Francis was wont to say, that "Certain things God wishes us to undertake, but the finishing thereof will be left to others. Thus, for instance, David gathered all the materials for a temple which his son, Solomon, afterwards built. The Saints, Francis and Dominic, and Ignatius of Loyola, aspired to martyrdom, and sought to gain it by all means; but God had not that crown in reserve for them, and only accepted their will. It is no mean act of resignation to abandon oneself simply and sweetly to the will of

(*a*) The Institute of the Visitation B. V. M. is spread all over the world. Many houses are flourishing in this country, and the order has never undergone any reform. The best mark of excellence.

God when works fail which had been undertaken for his glory."

XII.—ABOUT SINCERITY.

He felt a horror for the saying, that we should love as if we were one day to hate, and to hate as if we were one day to love He admitted that the second part of that worldly principle can be more easily tolerated than the former, inasmuch it is less evil to hate only lightly and with some thought of renewing the friendship, than to bear that implacable and irreconcilable hatred, which behoves Satan's more than man's nature; for it is human for one to get angry, but it would be execrable if one could not be pacified and would not pardon. Hence, to bear such hatred that may one day be changed into love, appears like preparing the way to reconciliation.

He was asked one day what he understood by sincerity. "Why," said he, "it is in the word itself: '*sans cire*' (*a*).

"I am where I was before," rejoined the other.

"Do you not know what is honey without wax? It is that which comes from the comb, and is perfectly pure. The same you may say of the soul, when she is free from all duplicity; she is then called sincere, frank, cordial, and with no back entrance. Persons who are sincere are extremely tender in their friendship, which is the seasoning of all good society. On the other hand, a man of double mind is inconstant, and wavering in all his ways (*b*); he places confidence in none, and no one relies on him—a veritable Ishmael whose hands are turned against every one, and every one's hand is against him. His tongue is

(*a*) The French word *sincérité*, is pronounced somewhat like *sans cirité*. Now, *sans* means *without*, and *cire* means *wax*. Hence the play in the word.—Tr.

(*b*) "He hangs a rag on every bush."

a double-edged sword, and when he speaks words of peace, he is brooding malignity."

XIII.—ON REASON AND REASONING.

It was one of his sayings, that reason never deceives, but reasoning does. When any one went to him on any affair, or with a complaint, he listened most patiently and most attentively to all reasons that were laid before him; and as he abounded in judgment and prudence, he well knew how to discern what had any bearing on the matter from what was foreign to it. And when people would stubbornly defend their opinions by reasons which appeared plausible, but had not enough strength to secure a judgment, he would sometimes say very gently: "These are your reasons, I know it well; but do you know as well that not all reasons are reasonable?" Some one replied, that "He might as well charge the heat with not being hot." In his turn he replied, that "Reason and reasoning are two different things; reasoning is only the path leading to reason." And so he would endeavour to lead to truth the person who had strayed from it. Truth can never be separated from reason, because they are one and the same thing.

XIV.—ABOUT JUSTICE AND JUDGMENT.

He always drew well marked lines of separation between justice and judgment. The man of justice is just and equitable, and no matter in what circumstances placed, he will give every one their due. The man of judgment is an officer or magistrate whose avocation in life is to administer justice to every one according to the law of jurisprudence; but, unfortunately, the same might be said of these formalities that St. Bernard said of those wretched daughters who strangled their mother. They have been established for a good end that every one might have his due, accord-

ing to the principles of right and equity; but in the course of time and by the cunning deceit of men, instead of making them the handmaids of justice to give every man his own, they are made to act as so many means to take every body's property, and to let fall into the hands of those who manage affairs the best portion of the litigated property, even as it is said of a quarrel between two, that a third one will reap the fruit—*entre deux contendans une troisième jouit.*

Even as the ancient emperor remarked, that he might die of a surfeit of medicine, we may say that the multitude of laws and formalities strangle justice. Those who enter those meshes are like the silkworm who weaves his own grave.

To illustrate this he quoted the words of the prophet, "Justice he turned into judgment" (*a*). He would say, that those formalities were like suburbs, larger and more extensive than the city, and like lanterns, dazzling the eye and leading men by night unto precipices. Lastly, that the territory of judicature was a veritable land of Canaan that devoured its inhabitants, and where Samson's foxes set all the crops on fire.

(*a*) Ps. xciii. 15.

PART EIGHTH.

I.—ON OBEDIENCE

THE beauty of obedience does not consist in submitting to a superior of sweet manners, who rather begs than commands, but to bend under the yoke even of him who is severe and exacting.

It was his earnest wish that directors of souls should govern like fathers, not like masters, by example, not by command; thus he lead those under him with an incomparable sweetness; yet he expected a little tartness in superiors, and highly disapproved too much sensitiveness in inferiors. He would say: "A rough file will take the rust away more easily, and prepares the metal for a better polish. Have you not seen that they employ very sharp cards in order to scrape cloth thoroughly? And how many blows from the heaviest hammers are necessary to work steel into the best of blades?

"An excessive indulgence on the part of superiors may often be the source of great evils. Sugar is kept from infants because it engenders worms. A superior who is all sweetness jeopardizes his authority, and renders it contemptible; yet he may gain an excessive good-will on the part of his inferiors, but at the expense of God, inasmuch as they will obey the man whom they love, and because they love him—not God in the man, and because they love God. It is the suavity of the command that will work this change by degrees.

"On the other hand, the severity of the superior tri-

more skilfully the fidelity of a heart who loveth God in earnest. There is no other baiting in such a command but the sweetness of divine love, for whose sake alone we should obey; and hence the perfection of obedience is greater in proportion as the intention is pure, disinterested, and aiming only at God.

"To obey a crabbed and ill-natured superior is like drawing limpid water from a basin into which it falls from the throat of a lion of bronze. It is even a solution of Samson's riddle, that 'out of the eater cometh forth meat' (*a*)."

II.—ON SCIENCE AND CONSCIENCE.

Most undoubtedly science adorns piety greatly, as the Fathers and Doctors of the Church prove it. But when we examine the two, and we must make our choice, there is none that would not prefer a good conscience to the most recondite learning. Some one was once praising a clergyman for his eminent piety, but lamented at the same time his want of science. "It is true," said the Bishop, "that science and piety are the two eyes of an ecclesiastic: but as no objection is made to the ordination of a man because he has only one eye, especially if it be that of the canon, so a priest does not cease to be a fit servant of the sanctuary because he has only the eye on the canon side, *i.e.*, he leads a life exemplary and canonical, which means well-regulated. True, there is a kind of ignorance which is gross and unpardonable, and one possessed by it should be compared to the blind leading the blind; but when a man is praised for his piety, it shows that he has the true light, which leads to Jesus Christ. Should he lack those brilliant acquirements of learning and erudition, which

(*a*) Jud. xiv. 14.

would render him a wonder in the pulpit, it is enough that he can, as the Apostle says, exhort the people in sound doctrine, and reprimand those who stray from the path of duty. See? the Lord directed Balaam's ass to teach his owner."

III.—PATIENCE IN SUFFERING.

He was once assisting a person extremely ill, who endured her acute suffering with perfect patience. "She has found," he remarked, "the honey-comb in the lion's mouth." But anxious as he was to probe the depth of true virtues, and anxious to find if this person suffered purely for the love of God, and not for the sake of human praise, he undertook to praise her patience; he exaggerated her sufferings, and admired her courage, silence, and the good example she gave, but he was not deceived. She met his remarks thus: "My Father, you do not see the rebelliousness of my senses, and of the inferior part of my soul; indeed, everything there is disorder and topsy-turvey; and were it not that the grace of God, and the fear of him, has built a fortress in the superior part, there would have been a mutiny and general rebellion long ago. I am like the prophet whom the angel carried away, holding him by his hair; my patience holds on only by a thread, and *unless the Lord had been my helper, my soul had almost dwelt in hell.* You see, then, it is only the *grace of God in me* that keeps me in good countenance. I only play the hypocrite. Were I to follow my promptings, I would cry and toss about, I would be spiteful, and murmur,: but God has bridled my lips with a bit that I do not dare to break whilst he holds the reins in that hand of his, which I have learned to love and honor."

As he left the room he remarked: "She has true patience. We had better to rejoice than grieve at her

sufferings, because that virtue is *made perfect* in infirmity. But did you observe how God hides from her the perfection he has given her, keeping the knowledge thereof out of her sight? Her patience not only is full of courage, but affectionate, and humble, and like a genuine balm that, being unmixed with spurious matters, sinks to the bottom of limpid waters. But be on your guard! do not repeat to her what I have said, lest she be tempted with vanity, and thereby the whole economy of grace become embarrassed, for that grace flows abundantly only in the valley of humility. Allow her to possess her soul peacefully in patience; she is in peace, in her bitter bitterness."

IV.—WE SHOULD BE FAITHFUL IN SMALL THINGS.

Some one was playing at a game and cheating his adversary; the Bishop was present, and remonstrated. "Ho!" replied the youth, "we are only playing for a farthing?"

"And what if you were playing for dollars? Whoso is faithful in small things will ever be faithful in greater ones; and whoso will not dare to steal a pin will not take a dollar."

I called on him on a very hot day, and complained of the excessive heat. He asked, "Wouldn't you like to have a fire made?" "What!" I exclaimed, "do you wish to finish broiling me?" But he answered that fire warms those who feel cold, and cools those who feel warm. And after a little pause he naïvely added: "See now, I was playing double dealing; I remember having heard you to say that you dreaded the cold greatly, and never felt too warm, and I wished to have a good laugh at the excess of heat you are suffering, and make you remember what you have often said, that it is better to sweat than to shiver, and that fire

was welcome at all seasons. Now you may judge how wide my thoughts were of the reply I made."

Often have I heard him say: "The greatest fidelity to God consists in avoiding small faults, great ones inspire one with horror, and hence it is easier to avoid them."

V.—HOW TO CONTROL ONE'S WISHES.

Blessed Francis often remarked that the worst trait in the covetousness of the eyes is, that they always look upwards and never downwards, and thus he who is suffering from it never has repose or settled contentment. Let a man conceive a wish to be richer or to ascend higher, and farewell to the happiness heretofore enjoyed in his possessions or in his situation. And when he gains the coveted point, the more he eats the fiercer his appetite grows, and his moral dropsy increases the more he drinks, so that he is forever on the go without ever reaching the goal of his ambition, and death overtakes him by far sooner than his hopes are realized, or his pretensions satisfied.

Francis not only had placed a limit to his wishes, but he seemed to have no desires of ascending higher, or else he deemed his position far above what he wished to be in. His sense of humility made him often wonder that God should have allowed him to be raised to the dignity of Bishop, and its eminence appeared to him so great that he shuddered when he reflected on its responsibilities. Full of esteem for his fellow-Christians, he often felt astonished at seeing himself placed in authority over many whom he deemed far more worthy and capable than himself.

When complaint was made that very little revenue had been left for a decorous support of his dignity, he would reply: "Ah! what had the Apostles to support their dignity, so much greater than mine? How many very honest

people have even less than I? Piety and a little competency is all we need; and, if we have enough wherewith to support and clothe ourselves, what more do we want? True, a Bishop must be hospitable and give alms, provided that he has the means to do it. But when one is reduced to such straits that he has nothing but what will barely support him, then all that is left to him is a good will; and provided that this good will is sincere and true, *God, who is rich in mercy*, and who looks to the heart rather than to the gift, will certainly take the will for the deed."

VI.—ON JUSTICE.

It was a saying of his that in order to be truly just, one should buy when he sells, and sell when he buys; for the most universal injustice, one that reigns in the world to an alarming extent, consists in this, that who offers his goods for sale endeavours to get for it all he can, and he who buys them will give as little as possible, and hence that immensity of frauds and deceits which dishonor commerce.

Again:—Long ago has Justice become one-handed, and has lost one of her arms, because, he would say, in rewarding and punishing, she seems to be bereft of her right arm. For there is no more award given to virtue; whereas her left arm, by which punishments are inflicted, seems to be always at work, however paralysed it may appear, and very lame. A public execution is reserved not so much for the culprit as for the unfortunate; whilst favor and corruption will, with great cunning, shelter and exonerate the greatest criminals, although Holy Writ warns us that he that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, both are abominable before God. (*a*)

(*a*) Prov. xvii. 15.

VII.—ABOUT INN-KEEPERS.

He had a special affection for inn-keepers, and for the least kindness they exhibited towards their guests he looked upon them as Saints. In his opinion, theirs was the best situation in which to serve God in their neighbor's person, and to advance rapidly towards heaven: such men are continually employed in works of mercy, although, like physicians, they take pay for their services.

At the usual conversation which he held after dinner with his household, mention was made of taverns, and some said that taverns were nothing but dens of brigands. The Prelate was evidently displeased at the remark, but neither the place nor the frame of the speaker's mind would allow a reprimand, hence he very adroitly turned the subject away by the following: "A Spanish palmer, whose pocket was not surfeited with money, halted at an inn, where, after having very poorly fared, he was so exorbitantly charged that he called heaven and earth to witness the bad usage he had got. On leaving the tavern all in wrath, he saw at the other side of the square another inn, and a cross standing between the two. The sight seemed to open a vent to his anger, and he cried, 'Truly this is Calvary, and they have placed the cross of our Lord between the two thieves,' meaning the two inn-keepers. But the master of the inn opposite to that where he had stayed being at the door, heard the remark, and asked the pilgrim very civilly in what had he offended him, that he should be called a thief? The latter had more wit about him than his pilgrim's appearance seemed to bespeak in his behalf, and he quickly rejoined, 'Hush! hush! brother, you'll be the good one,' the which meant of course, that 'as there was a thief on each side of the cross of our Saviour, a good and a bad one, you shall be the

good one for me, inasmuch you have not harmed me; but how else could I call your companion, who has cheated me so keenly?'" And the Bishop concluded by saying, "that the poor pilgrim had drowned his grief in his gentle little wit: yet it was necessary to avoid sweeping condemnations of peoples and trades, such as to call them thieves, arrogant, or traitors, inasmuch such assertions are for none individually, and the whole of such classes and professions would resent it in general, and feel very badly at it individually." Nor would he allow his students to dispute with inn-keepers about their prices. When he was told that they were altogether unreasonable, and sold their goods double and treble the price, he answered, "It is not only for that we have to pay, but may we not take into account their cares, troubles, watching at night, and the good will they manifest to us? Indeed there is no pay enough for all that."

Thus the inn-keepers, knowing his ways, would not bargain with his attendants, but left the settlement to him, asking for only what he thought they deserved, and the consequence was that they were generally paid over and above what they would have demanded.

VIII.—SPIRIT OF POVERTY AMID RICHES, AND OF MUNIFICENCE IN POVERTY.

St. Charles Borromeo and Blessed Francis offer two very striking opposite examples. The former, a nephew of the Pope, richly endowed by his uncle, with upwards of one hundred thousand livres income, besides his own private patrimony, and yet amidst so much wealth, the spirit of poverty reigning over all—no tapestry, no silver service, no costly furniture, and his own table, even when he had guests, so frugal, that it bordered on austerity, for

he lived only on bread and water, and some vegetables. The key of his treasures was in the hand of the poor. Himself was poor in his wealth. But Francis had the spirit of munificence in his poverty, which can be well estimated by the scanty revenues of his Bishopric. his own private patrimony he had resigned into the hands of his family. Yet he did not discard tapestry, or silver ware, or costly furniture, especially when used for the exigencies of divine worship: the ornaments and decorations of the House of God he felt much at heart. Personages of the highest standing had been often received by him with such a pomp, that it was a matter of wonder how he could do so much, having so little at his disposal. He had great respect for his own dignity, and for the honor due the Master he served. (*a*)

It has been remarked by an ancient philosopher, that the man was truly magnanimous who used earthenware as if it were of silver, his heart being so good that he knew how to make virtue out of necessity, being equally satisfied with abundance or distress; yet he thought there was more courage in the man who could use silver plates, and yet make no more ado about it than as if they had been of earthenware. The former is rich in imagination, the latter is truly poor in spirit, wealth not affecting him at all. Thus did the great Apostle express himself:

(*a*) An American gentleman once called on the great and good Cardinal Cheverus, and while talking with him of his old friends in America, said that 'the contrast between the Cardinal's position in the episcopal palace of Bordeaux and in his former humble residence when he was Bishop of Boston, was a very striking one.' The humble and pious Prelate smiled, and taking his visitor by the arm, led him from the stately hall in which they were conversing into a narrow room, furnished in a style of austere simplicity: 'The palace,' said he, 'which you have seen and admired, is the residence of the Cardinal Archbishop of Bordeaux; but this little chamber is where John Cheverus lives.'"—Ch. Fairbanks "Aguecheck." p. 213: Boston, Shepard & Co., 1859.

"I know how to abound, and to suffer need," being perfectly satisfied with either.

IX.—EXAMPLE OF FRUGALITY IN A PRELATE.

His Grace the Archbishop of Lyons, late Cardinal of Marquemont, and our blessed Bishop had agreed upon an interview, and bestowed upon me the honor of being their host, as my residence was half-way between the two Sees. During their stay of eight or ten days I might have treasured many examples of exalted piety, had I been a more careful gleaner. The sermons they preached in our cathedral, the daily celebration of the Holy Mass, and their conversation, gave my diocesans immense edification. What seemed to annoy them, and annoyed me more, was their continual complaints that they were too well treated, while I answered them that I received far more from them than I could even repay in coin. Clergy and laity were most attentive and prodigal in securing the best things for the distinguished Prelates' table. "When you go," I said to them, "they will give no more: it is you that has brought the good cheer. In your absence farewell to my days of abundance."

One day, after dinner, they conjured me to retrench the superfluities of the table, and to treat them as St. Charles did the Bishops who passed through Milan, and called on him. I remarked, that I was not acquainted with the treatment bishops received from St. Charles, because the Archbishop had left this world the very day I made my entrance into it. But I would tell them how his cousin and successor, Cardinal Fred. Borromeo entertains them, for I had dined at his table during several journeys I had made to Italy: "Well, then, you know that he is said to have an income of one hundred and fifty thousand *livres*,

the whole of which he spends in works for the glory of God, honor of the church, and good of the people. The foundation of that grand Ambrosian Library is only one spark of his munificence. But as regards his own person, his house, and his table, he observes a frugality truly wonderful. You know better than I can tell you what is that which in Italy they call *Parte* (*a*) and is given by the Pope, the Cardinals, and all other Prelates, to their domestics—the same is given to the family of the Cardinal Archbishop of Milan. As for his own person and room, you see nothing but what is sheer necessity. One day, speaking of the regulations *De Reformatione* made by the Council of Trent, he complained that he did not, generally speaking, see the *frugalem mensam et pauperem suppellectilem* (*b*). His heart was grieved at the many poor who thronged the doors of episcopal palaces, while their senseless walls were covered with costly tapestry, and their tables groaned under superfluous dishes, and even of the remnants thereof nothing was given to the poor (*c*)."

But as they pressed me to give my experience of one of those dinners, I narrated how the Bishop of Ventimiglia and myself had assisted at the Pontifical Mass in the cathedral of Milan, on the 4th of March, 1616, on the anniversary of the death of St. Charles Borromeo. I was then on my way back from Rome. We were invited to dinner, and with us Count Charles Borromeo. In the house I saw no tapestry, nor ornaments of silk. A few paintings of religious subjects over walls perfectly naked, but extremely clean and white. Plates, salt-cellars, ewers, and basins to

(*a*) The *Parte* is a certain portion, or *ratio* of bread and wine, distributed every day to the servants and grooms of Cardinals and Prelates.

(*b*) *A frugal table and a modest furniture. Tr.*

(*c*) Most assuredly the same cannot be said of our modern Bishops, and much less of the American Prelates. *Tr*

wash one's hands in, and for other purposes, were all of white porcelain. Only the spoons were of silver, but forks and knives were of steel burnished to a perfect sheen. The benediction at table was given after the formula prescribed in the Roman Breviary, and we sat down. One of his chaplains began a chapter from the Gospel, and the reading continued about half the time we sat at dinner; and we had listened to it quietly before anything was served. The first course was an equal portion to each guest, just as is served in communities, and we received two dishes each, one with a few spoonfulls of *vermicelli*, while the other contained a small chicken afloat on some gravy. Then came the second course, which was the main part of the feast. At first we received two dishes each, the first held three balls of meat hashed with herbs, of the size of an egg, and the other, one thrush and an orange. This was the principal part of the banquet. But then we were served with two dishes for dessert, containing, one a pear, already peeled, and the other a little napkin. I thought that the latter was given to wipe our hands on; but then I saw the Bishop of Ventimiglia fumbling his fingers in it, and drawing out a piece of Milanese cheese, of the size of half-a-dollar; so I began my search, and found the same, and the napkin was reserved for the use I ascribed to it at first, when the waiters poured out for us some water which seemed scented with the perfume of rose or orange. There, you have the full account of our feast on that great festival day, and I am sure you cannot say that there was either superfluity, or anything to raise fumes to cloud the brain and render it incapable of the most serious occupation after dinner.

"Now, is it your pleasure that I shall treat you *à la Borromeo?*" but they begged of me to take into consideration that this side of the mountains we had stomachs that

did not pride in light charges, but, at the same time, did not like the heavy ordnance with which I had thus far burdened them.

Then M. de Marquemont, as a counterpart to my story, related another which he had witnessed in Rome: "One of our Cardinals, a man of great virtue and piety, but whose name I do not wish to mention, invited Cardinal Bellarmino to dinner, and, well acquainted with his eminent sanctity, he preferred giving him a Borromean repast to one *à la French*. Accordingly, he entertained him with extreme frugality, and wishing to give him the merit of it, he told him, after dinner, that he had treated him in the most familiar and home-like manner. Cardinal Bellarmino, a man otherwise of cheerful disposition, at the words 'familiar and home-like,' made no other reply but '*Assai, Monsignore illustrissimo, assai*' (*a*), which words actually meant 'a little too much;' but our Cardinal, who knew much more of French than of Italian, thought the *assai, assai*, of the Italian Prelate was the same as our *assez, assez* (*b*), and thereby he meant that there had been more than necessary at table, and he resolved to make amend by another even more frugal dinner."

X.—ON THE PASSION OF OUR LORD.

In our Blessed Father's opinion there is no more powerful goad to spur us to the acquisition of divine love than the consideration of the passion and death of our Saviour. He called it the sweetest and the strongest of all motives of piety. "But how can you reconcile sweetness with violence?" "In the sense of St. Paul, that the love of God *presseth us*, and in that of the canticle, that *love is strong as death, jealousy is as hard as hell* (*c*). No one

(*a*) Literally, 'Much so, most illustrious sir, much so.'
(*b*) 'Enough, enough.' (*c*) Cant. viii. 6.

can deny that love is the sweetness of sweetness, and the balm for all bitterness: yet see it compared to the most violent of all things, death and hell. The reason is, that as there is nothing so powerful as sweetness, so there is nothing more sweet or more lovely than its power. What is sweeter or milder than oil and honey? fire the two together, and you will see what a blaze. Nothing sweeter than a bee; provoke it, and oh! what a piercing sting? Jesus on his Cross is the lion of Judah, and Sampson's riddle. In his wounds we find the honey-comb of the strongest love, and it is from the power closed therein that flows the sweetness of the greatest consolations. Certainly, as the death of our Divine Redeemer is the highest proof of his love towards us, it must also be the strongest of all the motives of our love for him. Remember the great prayer of St. Bernard: 'O Lord! grant that the burning and honeyed force of your crucified love may absorb my heart, that I may die for the love of your love, O Redeemer of my soul, who have deigned to die for the love of my love.'"

Of this excess of love, which took the life of the lover of our souls on Mount Calvary, spoke Moses and Elias on Mount Tabor amid the glory of the transfiguration. He thus taught us that even amid the celestial glory, whereof the transfiguration was only a faint prelude, after contemplating and loving the goodness of God, in itself and for its own sake, no more powerful motive there will be to love the great Saviour than the recollection of his passion and death. With such feelings will the angels and saints sing the canticle: "The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and benediction (*a*)."

(*a*) Apoc. v. 12.

XI.—THE ODOR OF PIETY.

Our Blessed Father attached great necessity to being impressed with the importance of diffusing the good odor of piety, arising from the examples of a good life; not for one's glory, but for that of our Heavenly Father. Indeed those who perfume the world with the odor of their good example, and thereby show the path of justice to others, will shine forever like brilliant stars in the firmament of the Church. And if a malediction is pronounced on those who give scandal, what benedictions will not be showered on the head of those who, by the odor of their virtues, attract others towards a good life. St. Paul says, we Christians "are the good odor of Christ unto God, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one, indeed, the odor of death unto death; but to others the odor of life unto life" (*a*).

Some person had taken an unfavorable view of the Institute of the Visitation, qualified it as an innovation, and questioned St. Francis as to "how will in the end this order serve the Church?" "To follow the business of Queen Saba," replied he, with a smile. "What is that?" asked the other. "To do honor to him who is more than Solomon, and to fill with perfume and good odor the whole militant Church."

XII.—TRUST GOD.

He was in the habit of saying that when we justify ourselves before men it is done cowardly, vilely, and unsatisfactorily; but when we trust in God we do it nobly, openly, and carrying evidence in our acts. If we are innocent, he will make our innocence appear, sooner or later, never

(*a*) II Cor. ii. 15, 16.

allowing that those be confounded who put their hopes in him. He has told us by his prophet, "Because he hath hoped in me I will deliver him; I will protect him because he hath known my name. He shall cry to me, and I will hear him; I am with him in tribulation, I will deliver him, and I will glorify him" (*b*). And so he did with our Blessed Lady. When the knowledge of her pregnancy, and the ignorance of the great dignity of her having been chosen the mother of God threw St. Joseph into such a state of doubt and anguish, he sent an angel to dispel the clouds of his mind.

XIII.—EVENNESS OF SPIRIT.

Nothing have I heard him to urge more earnestly than to obtain a holy evenness of spirit. He would say: "We journey over the sea of life; like skilful pilots we must steer our course straight between the surging waves. Again: the pilots are led by the polar star. We have also our polar star—the holy will of God, which we must incessantly keep before our eyes. All the inequalities of our spirit proceed from our looking to the creatures losing sight of God; and thus, according to the variety of accidents which happen in this life, we are of various humors, and change our disposition. But when we look at all things and changes in the ever uniform equality of the holy will of God, who distributes, as he pleases, prosperity and adversity, health and sickness, riches and poverty, life and death, and when we reflect that from all these sources we can draw the means of glorifying God, we enter upon that lovely Christian indifference, which produces a holy equality of spirit."

(*b*) Ps. xc. 15, 16.

XIV.—NEVER HURRY.

He held in great praise those two ancient sayings—Hasten slowly—and—Soon done if well done. He would never allow too many things to be undertaken at once, but what was to be done should be done well. One of his favorite words was: *little and well.* He cautioned persons against putting their perfection in a multitude of exercises either of interior or exterior devotion. "But then," some would say to him, "what becomes of that insatiable love, whereof the masters of spiritual life speak so much, and which never says enough, and never thinks that it has reached the goal, but ever advances with rapid strides?" and he would say: "it is by the roots that we must grow in that love, and not through branches .. It is growing only in branches, when we pretend to perform a multitude of virtuous actions, many of which will be found not only defective but even superfluous, and like those useless shoots of the vine, which must be pruned away that the grape may grow; whereas it is growing from the roots when we perform few works, but we perform them with great perfection, I mean with great love of God, wherein consists the whole Christian perfection. It is to this that the Apostle exhorts us, when he writes about being *rooted and founded in charity*, that we may be able to *know the charity of Christ, which surpasses all knowledge* (*a*). But you will say—we cannot do too much for God, we cannot force our march enough in order not to be overtaken by the night, when no more work can be done: must we not make the most of our time? Adorable truths are these and worthy of serious consideration; but they are not in opposition with the wise principle that we must perform rather few good acts well than many and carelessly.

(*a*) Eph. iii, 17, 18.

"How shall we do a good act perfectly? First, with great fervor; second, with great determination; third, with great purity of intention. Only one action thus performed is worth an immense number of others done, first, coldly; second, carelessly; third, with less purity of intention.

"Then, to make a steady progress in perfection, it is not a question of multiplying our exercises, but of increasing our fervor, the force and purity of divine love in our ordinary actions; an humble virtue, practiced with ardent, strong and pure charity, is incomparably more agreeable to God, and gives him more glory than a virtue of greater eclat practised with a slothful, feeble, and less ardent charity."

Once the holy Prelate told us the following: "Some time ago, some holy religieuses said to me: 'Bishop, how shall we manage this year? last year we fasted three times a week, and used the discipline as often. What shall we do now? we must needs do something more this year, both in order to give thanks to God for the year past, and to to advance farther in his holy ways.' It is well put, I replied, we must ever advance: but we do not advance, as you imagine, by a multitude of pious practices, but through the perfection with which we perform them, trusting evermore in our God, and evermore mistrusting ourselves. Last year you fasted three days in the week, and used the discipline as often; if you mean to double these practices this year, you will have to take the whole week: but how will you manage next year? you'll have to have a week of nine days, or either fast twice a day. Great is the folly of those who long for a martyrdom in India, and do not apply themselves to do well and perfectly that which belongs to their situation in life. Great is the illusion of those who will eat more than they can digest! We have not spiritual heat enough to digest all we embrace for our perfection,

and yet we will not get rid of that anxiety of spirit, which goads us on to wish to undertake a great deal more."

XV.—HOW ONE SHOULD PREPARE FOR RELIGIOUS LIFE.

Our Saint was told that a certain young profligate had resolved to rush into the cloister—"He is not on the road to it, but to the hospital," said he.

The young man had said that the cloister was his last ditch, after he had eaten up his all, that retreat could not fail him; meantime he would enjoy the world to its utmost, that he may have no regrets, at the moment of his severance from it: like Solomon, he refused his senses nothing. "Oh! but he looks after a very bad pattern!" replied Blessed Francis, "for he whom he takes for his model has left us very uncertain about his salvation. Probably the cloister will not stand him in good stead, but he is in a fair way for the hospital." It was a prophecy. The youth, bereft of every thing, threw himself into the cloister, which in a few days cast him off, like the sea casting a carcass upon the shore. His creditors threw him into a debtor's prison.

These particulars were related to the Saint, who said: "I never believed that he had taken the right path to the cloister; he caressed the world too fondly to give it a kick all of a sudden. To cherish a friend, from whom you intend to break off, is not in the ordinary course of nature, unless we mean treason: and moreover, it was an outrage against grace that called him to the cloister, to lead a life so impure, and so much in opposition to the conventual life which he intended to embrace. None will insult him at whose hands one expects favor and assistance. It was not the spirit of God that led him to the desert; but like Adam, rebellious, he was chased away from the terrestrial paradise.

Yet if trials will bring him to his senses, he will find in prison the same grace that would have awaited him in the cloister. Such was the comfort of the Blessed Peter Celestin, who was thrown into a prison by the severity of his successor Boniface VIII. He would say to himself: 'Peter, now hast thou found that which thou has so long desired, after which thou hast so often sighed amid the cares and anxieties inseparable from the chair of St. Peter. Thou hast now solitude, silence, retirement, a cell, and darkness; in thy narrow, but happy dungeon, praise God at all hours, because he has granted thee the wish of thy soul, although in a different way from what thou hast sought, but more sure, and more agreeable to his eyes. God wishes to be served in his own way, not in thine. What dost thou wish in heaven or on earth, but his divine will? O happy cross, long since coveted, obtained at last! I press thee to my heart, oh! receive the disciple of him who through thee has wrought my salvation in this world.'"

At last the wretch came out of prison, despised by all, heart-broken, beggared, and with the symptoms of a terrible malady, contracted by debauchery. His only refuge was the hospital, where he fell in pieces, eaten up by vermin, and sank into an ignominous grave.

On another occasion the holy Prelate was told of some young people who wished to enter religious life, and before taking the final step plunged into the pleasures of the world, to which they were going to bid a last farewell. He always suspected such vocations, and in fact few of such candidates ever professed: for their previous conduct doomed them to lose the grace they needed the most, and which they had so much abused. Once he was told, "but they only fell back to make a bolder spring;" "yes," he replied, "but they may back so far, and make a spring so bold that they will lose their breath."

On the other hand he felt full of hope, when such aspirants prepared themselves for the great step by retirement, patience, prayer, fasting, receiving the holy communion, and other practices of devotion. He would say: "they are in earnest, and do not gamble with grace: or if they play, their dealings are in genuine coin; they will not act like Lot's wife, who looked back; nor like, I hope, the Israelites, who yearned after the onions of Egypt."

XVI.—ABOUT THE BEADS.

A certain person wished to follow the example of the blessed father, who, she was told, had made a vow to tell his beads every day. She applied to him for advice.

"By no means!" was the reply.

"But why will you not permit others to do what yourself have done in your youth?"

"That word *youth* decides the question, for I did it with little reflection: now, that I am advanced in years, I tell you not to do it. I do not advise you not to say them: on the contrary, I entreat you most earnestly not to let a day pass without reciting them, it being a prayer most agreeable to God and our blessed Lady: but let your piety be the result of a firm and determined purpose rather than a vow, so that if you should omit them you do not expose yourself to the danger of offending God. For it does not all consist in the vow, but in the obligation of fulfilling it, and that under penalty of sin, which is a very serious matter. I assure you I have often been greatly embarrassed, and often I have been on the point of asking a dispensation, or at least having it commuted into some other work of equal importance but not binding so strictly."

XVII.—FOUNDATION OF MONASTERIES AND CHOICE OF SUPERIORS.

During the thirteen years he survived the establishment

of his Institute, he allowed only twelve foundations, and refused three times as many, led by his favorite principle, "Little but good." Then he always felt great anxiety about the choice of superiors, because on them depends the welfare of the community. Pressed on all sides he had the nicest way to refuse applications. Long I had to work before I obtained a little colony of the Sisters for my diocese of Belley. He would say: "They are just born to piety; we must allow them to grow strong. Let us have patience, and we shall do a great deal if the little we do pleases the great Master. Better for them to grow through the roots of virtue than in the branches of many houses. Will the number of monasteries increase their perfection?

"I observe that many orders have lost their observance in that way. It is more difficult than it appears to find good superiors. Some would do with them as with the apostles—disperse them all over the world. But are they as confirmed in grace as the apostles? Oftentimes we demolish instead of building, and instead of increasing the glory of God we prevent it; scattering is dissipating."

He was wont to repeat with the prophet, "'Thou hast multiplied the nation, and hast not increased the joy' (*a*). I very well know that the plausible pretext of this multiplication is the greatest glory of God, and a desire to draw more souls to the service of this glory. But I doubt whether this is always the true motive, and self-love does not get mixed up with it."

XVIII.—PRUDENCE AND SIMPLICITY.

"I do not know," he said one day, "what this poor virtue of prudence has done to me. I find it hard to love it, and if I do love it, it is only from sheer necessity, because

(*a*) Isaiah ix. 3.

it is the salt and light of life. The beauty of simplicity enraptures me, and I will always give a hundred serpents for one dove. I know it is useful to combine them together, and the gospel tells us so; yet it seems to me we must do as in the manipulation of theriac, in which to a little of the serpent many other ingredients are added. Were the doses of serpent and dove equal, I would not trust myself to it; the serpent might kill the dove, but he could never be killed by her. Then again, there is a certain human prudence, that of self, which Holy Writ calls dead, inasmuch, as it will only aid to do evil actions, and in a roundabout way.

"They tell me that in an age so cunning like ours, one needs to have prudence, at least to prevent being taken by surprise. I do not blame the principle; but I believe that the other principle is more evangelic, which teaches us that it is a great wisdom before God to allow oneself to be devoured, and his goods taken from him, knowing that far better and greater goods are awaiting us; in a word, a true Christian will ever prefer to be anvil rather than hammer, robbed than rob, murdered than murder; and let the prudence of the world burst, and self be in despair, it pays better to be good and simple than cunning and malicious."

PART NINTH

I.—HOW TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR IN GOD.

The supernatural love which the Holy Ghost instils in our hearts, leads us to love God for the sake of himself, with a love of friendship; also, to love our neighbors with a love of friendship, referring it to God, who wishes us to love them because it pleases him so, and he is glorified by the love which we bear our neighbor for his sake. This is, what is properly called to love our neighbor in God, and for God. Then we do not seek our own interest, but the interest of our neighbor, and even this for the sake of God.

This kind of love is very rare, because almost every one seeketh his own, and not the interest of God, nor of their neighbor.

Our blessed Father says: "The most perfect acts of love towards our neighbors are those which we perform aiming at God, because then everything tends to God. But the services we perform for, and the attentions we pay to, those for whom we feel special affection, have far less merit, because of the great complacency and satisfaction we thereby feel, and because we are led to perform them more from impulse than through the love of God."

Loving our neighbors in God, and for God, makes our love for them more intense and more perfect; for, this reference to God changes our affection from natural into supernatural, from human into divine, and from temporal into eternal. In this sense our blessed Father said, that

"natural friendships were not very lasting, because their foundation is unsteady, and at the first misunderstanding they will cool and die: but this never happens in those friendships which are established in God, because their foundation is firm and solid." On another occasion he said "all other bonds uniting our hearts are made of glass and crockery, but the bond of holy charity is golden and adamantine."

Apropos of this, St. Catherine of Sienna used the following comparisons:—"If you take a glass and drink out of it, holding it down in the fountain basin, and there you keep it whilst you drink, drink as much as you please you will never drain it; but if you take the glass out of the basin, and drink out of it, it will soon be empty. Thus it happens with friendships: if they are not removed from their source (which is God), they will never dry up.

"We should," said Blessed Francis, "look at our neighbors in the bosom of the Saviour. Alas! whoever looks at them out of that, he runs great risk of loving them neither purely nor constantly, nor with an even love. But fix your eyes on that heart, and how can you help loving them, bearing their faults, helping them? or could you ever think them unmannerly, ugly, or annoying? Now, this neighbor is there, in the bosom of the Saviour, he is there very much beloved, and so much so, that the lover dies for him.

In fact, any other love either is no love, or deserves not the name of love, or *that* love is infinitely more than love.'

II.—EXPRESSIONS OF GOOD WILL.

A question was proposed to him, whether such expressions of good will as we may utter in behalf of persons towards whom our heart is not drawn, should not be considered

hypocritical and treacherous, inasmuch, as we make people believe what is not the reality. He said it was a very easy question to solve by making a distinction between the *sensitive* and the *rational* part of our soul. The aversion to a person arises from the sensitive part, hence it is no duplicity if the rational, which is the superior, acts in opposition to that; and in fact such acts of good will are the more to be valued, as they are forced, and show the empire of the superior part of the soul over the inferior, of reason over the senses; it is an act of that holy violence which carries the heavens, and is pleasing to God, who hates duplicity, and has pronounced a malediction against those who have double hearts.

"But," they urge, "if those to whom we address expressions of good will knew this struggle between the two parts of our soul, what would they think of us?" "We must care for God's judgment, and not for that of man. If they judge according to the flesh they will pity this rebellion of the inferior part against the superior; but if they judge after God, their judgment must needs be favorable, because it will be like that of God, who is the God of truth, and knows the inmost secrets of the soul."

One ounce of this strong and rational love is worth a hundred pounds of that soft and sensible one which we have in common with animals, and often betrays our reason, and upsets it. Whatever we do for God's sake, in strong opposition to the sensible part of the soul, gives evidence of the superabundance of grace, and of the great perfection of a work, the main spring whereof is grace itself.

We should be suspicious of what we do for God with feelings of pleasure; or at least ought to be on our guard lest we are on the wrong track, especially in our love for our neighbor, where there are some masked batteries, and so many turns that will stray us from God's love, such as

sympathy, complacency, an honorable, useful, or delectable interest, which are like so many brigands who waylay and rob us of the sight of God and of his love, and as we began with the spirit we end by the flesh.

Sentiment is a Delilah, who soothes Samson to sleep to shear him of his strength; it surprises reason when it is asleep. There is no evil in loving in God a person that is agreeable to us, provided we do in fact love more for God's sake than for the sake of one's agreeableness. Yet as it is very difficult, nay, impossible, to look in the mirror and not to see one's image therein, and to see the image without considering it, and to consider it without being pleased with it—a pleasure which makes us at last forget the mirror, then think of our image, and lastly only of ourselves; thus it is most difficult not to look and stop at one's self in the love we bear to our neighbors; whilst to love them with purity, it is necessary to love them in God, and for God, that is, because God is in them, or that he may be in them.

III.—LOVE TO BE HATED, AND HATE TO BE LOVED.

He never tired of recalling to our minds these words of Jesus Christ—*Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake Be glad and rejoice because your reward is very great in heaven* (*a*). On this he established the following principles:—

I. We must hate being loved, but for God's sake; for, there is great danger lest human friendships (however honest and pure at the beginning) should degenerate into evil, especially when the friendship is between persons of different sex.

II. It is a kind of robbery to wish to be loved otherwise

(*a*) Matt. v. 11.

than for God's sake; for we steal from God a part of the heart of those by whom we wish to be loved.

III. We thereby excite God's jealousy; for he will allow no rivals in the possession of our hearts.

IV. It is a great presumption to imagine that we can have any claim on the love of our neighbors.

And he would exclaim: "Oh, but those are blessed who are not the least amiable! for they feel assured that the love borne them is excellent, and wholly founded in God."

IV.—ABOUT THE EPISCOPAL CHARGE.

Whenever I complained of the trials and disappointments by which I was harassed in my diocese, the good Bishop would remind me that I could not hope to enjoy the friendship of Jesus unless I carried my cross, that the path of the cross is the only one which leads to heaven, and that even Adam, innocent as he was, was placed in the garden of Eden to work it. The evil entailed on mankind, in consequence of Adam's sin, was, that we are all to work and to suffer. And yet it is a more severe doom, that of having to work on souls, than to till the ground. The care of souls is the art of arts. None should undertake it unless he was determined to undergo a thousand trials. The Son of God was made a mark to many contradictions; shall not his work share the same? He has suffered exceedingly to rescue souls from perdition; shall his coadjutors and co-laborers be free from all sufferings? Those who are simply his disciples, shall they fare better than their master? In the Apostle's words to the young bishop Timothy, *Be instant in season and out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke, in all patience and doctrine* (*a*). Mark the word "patience" is placed before "doctrine," why? because we

(*a*) II Tim. iv. 2

cannot overcome certain difficult spirits but by patience; and this virtue enables us to possess our souls, and those of others. In this the patient man has the advantage over the most courageous, and the most passionate of men. Again, when the Apostle still enjoins upon his disciple *to be vigilant, to labor in all things, to be sober*, and he gives himself as an example of labor and abstinence, poverty and nakedness, and hunger and thirst, and of many sufferings, right and left, he raises his courage by holding up a still higher pattern, that of the prince of shepherds.

Thus did the holy Bishop encourage me. "We must take," he added, "the inheritance of the Apostle, and of the Apostolic bishops, as they have bequeathed it unto us. Where there is love, there is no labor, or it is a labor of love. What hardships Jacob submitted himself to, in order to gain possession of Rachel!"

V.—ABOUT OVER CAUTIOUS MINDS.

He had no patience with such people who make a thousand calculations over the most insignificant matters. He compared them to the silkworm, spinning and webbing itself into its own grave. A great deal of time is wasted on these useless considerations, which might be far better employed in acting; and by much considering whether we do right, we actually do wrong. St. Anthony was once asked the means by which to know whether we pray properly. "By not knowing it at all," was his reply. For he certainly prays well, who is so taken up with God that he does not know he is praying. The traveller who counts his steps and examines them carefully will not make much headway.

Blessed Francis would say: "Who is truly busy with a loving heart to please the celestial love in everything, has

neither the mind nor the time to reflect upon himself; his spirit is always tending upwards, where love reigns. He will not permit his soul to revert upon herself to see what she is doing, or whether she can be satisfied with her own doings. Alas! what satisfies and consoles us does not always satisfy the eyes of God; it only gives contentment to this miserable love and care we have of ourselves, outside of God, and independent of the consideration of him. 'But,' you will say, 'we must needs be careful in our actions, especially in what regards the Church, warned as we are, that, *with desolation is all the land made desolate; because there is none that considereth in his heart* (*a*).' I agree to all that, if you allow a distinction of time. We do not maintain that we should not examine ourselves and our conduct; such would be a beast's life, and a total dereliction of our reason. But *there is a time for everything.* The wise man says, *A time to act and a time to reflect.* You will not see a painter stopping at every stroke of his brush to see its effect on the canvas; he does it only at intervals. It is good to examine our consciences every morning and night. A Christian who has the welfare of his conscience at heart will wind up the clock of his soul at stated times; and even during the day it is a wise practice to give it a glance, and see if it is all right. But to do nothing else than to keep examining how we advance in the service of God, will not much promote the glory of our heavenly Father. It is an irksome occupation, and it will at the end become the employment of self-love. Salt and sugar are two excellent articles, but they should be used with moderation.

VI.—ABOUT SUPERIORS.

Certain parties complained to Blessed Francis that an

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a) Jer. xii. 11

ignorant man had been appointed their superior, in the place of one who treated them rudely, and their expressions were by no means respectful towards the individuals complained of. He replied: "We should never speak thus of superiors, however worthless they may be. God commands that we obey even rude and troublesome superiors, and *he that resisteth the powers, resisteth the ordinance of God* (*a*). If Balaam was enlightened by an ass, with much more reason you should believe that God, who has given you this superior, will direct him to teach you his divine will; although it may not always be in accordance with yours. I am told that this superior is very amiable, and that his lack of learning does not prevent him from being an excellent and exemplary man. Far better to have a superior who will practice what is good without talking about it, than to have one who will have a great deal to say about what is good, but will not practice it much.

(*a*) Rom. xiii. 2.

PART TENTH.

I—ABOUT MORTIFYING ONE'S NATURAL INCLINATIONS.

Often have I heard Blessed Francis say, that *the more one mortifies his natural propensities, the more will he attract supernatural inspirations.*

In truth, interior and exterior mortification are the most available means of drawing upon us the favors of Heaven. Yet it should be an honest self-denial, practiced in a true spirit of love of God. Those who thus mortify themselves are like the host of the Prophet Elias, upon which descended the fire from heaven.

The manna did not descend over the children of Israel until they had consumed everything they had carried away from Egypt; likewise, Heaven's favors are not bestowed upon those who still cling to the affections of the earth. *My spirit*, says the Lord, *shall not remain in man, because he is flesh* (Gen. vi. 3.).

II.—THE GIFT OF CONVERTING HERETICS.

Our blessed Bishop had a peculiar gift of leading wayward children of the church back to their mother, and of bringing rebellious ones to submission. As for the latter, besides the conversion of the bailiwick of Chablais, he obtained the conversion of about forty thousand heretics, sixteen thousand whereof he admitted himself in the church. No wonder, then, that the great and learned Cardinal du Perron should have said, that so far as silencing a heretic

he could do it, but converting them was another thing: and for that the Bishop of Geneva had received a special commission from heaven; for, as Cardinal de Berulle would say, the hand of God was in all that Francis undertook

III.—ABOUT REFORMATION.

He was often employed in reforming houses where the religious spirit had begun to decay. He went to work very slowly; his principle was to hasten slowly. In whatever you undertake do little by little, but do it well: there is great danger of going too far, and running matters into the ground. To those who betrayed impatience he would reply, *Pedetentim*, i. e., let us feel our way. To this purpose he quoted the wise man, who compares the path of the just to the morning light which rises slowly and increases until it becomes a perfect day. True progress is made from small things into greater ones. Even God, who needs no time to perfect his work, and *reaches from end to end mightily, still ordereth all things so sweetly* as to be scarcely perceptible (Wisdom, viii. 1.) Francis never began to work on the outside in order to reach the inside: of those who went about their work on that plan he would say, they tarry at the bark so long that they never reach the pith. Like painters and sculptors they work only at outlines; more illusion than reality.

Were a male religious family to be reformed, he urged upon them a sedulous exercise of mental prayer, spiritual reading, and a frequent approaching to the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist. By such means everything was accomplished without noise, or strain, or contradiction, in a way gentle and sweet.

With female orders he urged two things: 1st, for the body: *enclosure*, as ordered by the Council of Trent,

without which he did not think their good name and their honor could be safely maintained. 2d, for the soul: half an hour of mental prayer, twice a day. By these means they were easily reformed.

But he never mentioned austerities or corporal mortification: he only recommended the fasts of the church. Being once consulted as to the introducing the practice of walking bare-footed into a religious house, "O!" answered he, "let the feet alone; try to reform the head, not the feet."

IV.—THE BISHOP'S TEARS AFFECT A MAN TO COMPUNCTION.

A certain person went to confession to him, but told his sins in a manner that seemed more complacency than sorrow. The good man felt at once the miserable state of his penitent's soul, and began to weep and groan. At this the other asked him what ailed him? "Ah! brother," said he, "I am well indeed, thank God, but you are very sick," to which the penitent replied very coolly: "Indeed I never felt better." "Well, then, go on," said the Bishop. The other resumed his shocking statements with perfect nonchalance, and the Prelate wept even more bitterly. The man on his knees asked once more what made him cry so? "Alas! because you do not cry at all," replied Blessed Francis. These words smote the rock, and with a breaking heart the man cried, "Miserable man that I am, not to feel the enormity of my sins, which draw tears from your innocent heart!" And he was so moved that he would have fallen into despair, had not the Bishop comforted him; and making acts of contrition, which the other repeated with marvellous compunction, he prepared him to receive the holy sacrament, and from that day that penitent became a model of penitence.

These particulars were related to an intimate friend by the penitent himself, who would remark that "confessors often made the penitent cry, but I made my confessor weep: yet it is true that he paid me back in kind. May God grant I may never lose the grace I received at that moment!"

V.—HOW BEAUTIFULLY HE COMFORTED ANOTHER PENITENT.

A certain individual, well known to Blessed Francis, resolved at last to make with him a general confession, in which a chapter of the sins of his youth figured very conspicuously. The Bishop expressed great satisfaction.

"It is because you wish to console me, but in your soul you must think I am a great sinner," remarked the penitent.

"After having imparted absolution," replied the Bishop, "I would prove only pharisaical were I to look upon you as a sinner. You appear to me as white as snow, like unto Naaman coming out of the river Jordan. I feel my love for you redoubled when I witness the love and confidence God has inspired you with towards me. I look upon you as a child whom I have begotten in Jesus Christ, or rather a child in whose heart Jesus Christ is just arisen through my instrumentality. My good opinion of you increases in proportion with my love for you. By a change of the hand of the Most High, from a *vessel of dishonor* I have transformed you into one of honor and sanctification. Our Divine Lord did not change his determination of placing St. Peter at the head of the church—because he sinned: he valued his tears more than his fall—his repentance more than his sin. Indeed I would have little feeling were I not taking part with the angels in the great joy which they feel over your change and purification. Believe me, the

tears I have seen flowing from your eyes had on my heart the effect of water thrown by forgers over the heated iron, that becomes thereby even more heated. O! how I love your heart, which now loves its God so earnestly!"

The penitent was exceedingly consoled, and from that day conceived such feelings of compunction, that a frequent approach to the sacrament of penance was his richest source of happiness, and he never tired of repeating, "*Wash me yet more, O Lord, wash me more,*" and he was wont to call St. Francis his "angel at the pond Probatica" (John v.)

VI.—WALK IN THE SPIRIT OF FAITH.

By these words our blessed man meant that we should not be led by the dictates of the flesh and of the world, but by the principles revealed unto us by the heavenly Father. Thus we seek Jesus Christ like the magi of olden time—by the light of a star. Yet more; to walk in a lively faith means not only to walk by the light of faith, but with a genial warmth of holy charity, which is the soul and the life of faith. One then walks, like Abraham, *in the heat of the day.* It is both believing and living, whereas those who are led in their path only by the lights of the prudence of the flesh and of the world, are only allured by an *ignis fatuus*, that will lead them into a pit. For instance, the prudence of the flesh teaches that we must hate our enemy, whilst faith teaches to love them: the former says revenge; the latter, forgive as you wish to be forgiven. The prudence of the flesh teaches to hoard up riches—that the wealthy alone are happy, because they want nothing; but faith teaches that only *happy is that people whose God is the Lord* (Ps. 143)—that we must give the surplus to the poor—that we must keep our heart free from all attachment to the goods of this earth—in a word, the day is not so different from the night, nor light from darkness, as the

principles of faith are from the dictates of worldly prudence.

VII.—ABOUT THE DAUGHTERS OF THE VISITATION.

Some one said to him one day, "But what mean you to do with this congregation of women and girls? what good are they to the church? have we no other female orders to which they can attach themselves? would it not have been better had you instituted a congregation of ecclesiastics? How much better to devote to them the time you waste with those women, to whom you must repeat things a hundred times, before you are sure they understand you. You bury a treasure, and place a light under the bushel! you paint on the waters and draw on the sand!"

To all this the holy man calmly replied: "It is not for me to work in such exalted undertakings: gold and silver for the goldsmith: clay for the potter. Believe me, God is a great workman; he does incomparable things with the poorest tools. See what he did with a rod in the hands of Moses, and *even with the jaw-bone of an ass* in those of Samson! By whose hand but a woman's did he conquer Holofernes? Where did he draw the materials wherewith to create the world? From nothing! Remember that vast conflagrations have often arisen of a small spark. Where was found the sacred fire, after the people had returned from captivity, but in a pool of thick water? This weak sex has a claim to great compassion: thus we must bestow on them greater care, even as St. Bernard says, *The charge of souls regards the weak rather than the strong.* Our divine Saviour did not deny his cares to them; many followed him, and were faithful to him even to the foot of the cross, when he was abandoned by all, except his beloved disciple. The church calls them "the devout sex," a token of no mean opinion,

indeed. Then take into consideration the good example they will give wherever God will place them. Is it of no account to spread the good odor of Jesus Christ? Of the two qualities so necessary in a pastor, word and example, which is preferable? For my part, I prefer one ounce of the latter to one hundred pounds of the former. Unless life is good, learning degenerates into scandal: it is like a bell that rings but does not change place: hence that, *physician heal thyself.* True there are institutions in the church whereto some of these ladies might go: yet, great many enter the Visitation, who could not belong to any other institute, in consequence of infirmities and disabilities, which render them unfit for austere duties. And if we admit able-bodied and robust ladies into our order, it is because we need them to wait on the sick, and the weak, and the aged, for whom chiefly is this congregation established, after that sacred command, *Bear ye one another's burdens: and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ* (Cor. vi. 2.) But as for the advice you give me, that I should establish an institute for ecclesiastics, that faithful servant of God, M. de Berulle, has already founded one: he is better qualified for the work than I am, and he has more time, I being charged with such a heavy diocese, which might be called, in a certain sense, the head-place of all the errors which trouble the church? For the rest, leaving great undertakings to abler men, God will dispose of this little beginning, as he pleases."

VIII.—WHAT VALUE TO SET ON PUBLIC ESTEEM.

Blessed Francis was not indifferent to public esteem; but he wished it should be taken care of, more on account of God's service than for one's honor, more to avoid scandal than to increase one's glory. He compared it to snuff, which, taken moderately, may prove beneficial; but, if

abused, will sicken brain and lungs. Once he was greatly censured for some advice he had given in Paris to certain persons of rare virtue, and he thus alluded to it in a letter to me: "I am informed, by letters from Paris, that they have shaven my beard very close; but I hope that God will make it grow wider and longer, if it will be for his service. I do not wish to possess more esteem than is necessary for that purpose. For, provided God is served, it matters not whether it be through good report or bad report, arising from our reputation being elated or depressed."

He once cried before me: "My God! but what does this popularity mean after all? Why do so many people worship that idol? It is but a song, a shadow, an opinion, a smoke, a praise—the recollection whereof dies with its sound. It is an estimate often so false, that persons wonder at being praised for virtues whereof they only know to possess the opposite vices, and being blamed for faults which they have not. They are very sensitive, indeed, who complain of backbiting; what is it but a little cross built with words, scattered by the first wind? There is a difference between the words 'he has wounded me,' and 'he has insulted me,' as there is great difference between the buzz of a bee and its sting. Our ear and our skin must be very tender, indeed, if the former cannot bear the noise of a fly, and the latter is wounded by the brush of its wings. It was the prudence of the flesh that inverted the proverb: *bonne renommée vaut mieux que ceinture dorée* (*Anglice:* a good name is worth more than a gilt belt), which means that reputation is preferable to wealth. How contrary is this to the spirit of faith! Was ever a reputation more torn than that of Jesus Christ? Of how many insults was he not made the butt? How many charges were laid at his door! And yet the father *hath given him*

a name which is above all names (Phil. ii 12), and exalted him in proportion with his humiliations. And did not the Apostles go forth *from the presence of the council rejoicing, that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus?* O! but it is glorious to suffer for this worthy object! Yet we wish only such persecutions as will bring glory to our name: our vanity must be flattered by our sufferings: we wish to be crucified gloriously. But were the martyrs applauded by the spectators? On the contrary, they were cursed? Ah! there are few, indeed, who are willing to sacrifice their reputation for the advance of the glory of him who died such an ignominious death upon the cross, in order to procure for us an everlasting glory!"

IX.—ON THE PURITY OF DIVINE LOVE.

The holy prelate aimed at acquiring, above all, the purity of divine love.

Hear him: "Please the immense goodness of God; let his love be our great love. Alas! when will it consume us, and when will it consume our life, to make us die entirely to ourselves, and live only for him? O, that to him alone be forever honor, glory and benediction!"

Again: "Indeed, should I ever discover in my soul ever so little of affection that was not of God, in God, and for God, I would rid me of it immediately: and I would by far prefer not to exist at all, than not to be wholly of God, without reserve. Should I ever discover in me the least part that was not marked with the sign of Jesus Christ, I would get rid of it immediately even as the Scripture says that we must pluck out the eye or cut the hand that scandalizes us." (*See what St. Francis teaches on this subject in his* TREATISE ON THE LOVE OF GOD, B. XII, ch. 2 and 3.)

X.—ABOUT HUMILITY.

Should our humility either of understanding or of heart not be animated by charity, it would be a pagan virtue, our Saint said. We should love to please God in humiliations not of our choice: for, he said, crosses of our cut are always rather light, and he valued an ounce of endurance higher than tons of actions, which, however goodly, proceed from our choice. To bear insults, humiliations and abjection was in his judgment the genuine touch-stone of humility, for we thus conform ourselves to Jesus Christ, the model of all solid virtue, who *emptied himself taking the form of a servant..... becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.* (Phil. ii. 7.) Then he highly praised those who went in quest of humiliations and abjections, when they do not assail us from outside. Yet he was very wary of indiscretions, lest human self love should creep into the practice. To be annoyed at honors and to be pleased and delighted with humiliations was, in his opinion, a high degree of humility, even as the worldling frets under humiliations and is delighted with honors. He quoted the example of Moses who preferred the shame of his people to the honors of the court; Esther who loathed the ornaments which she had to wear in order to please Assuerus, her husband; the Apostles who held it to account of great joy to suffer something for the name of Jesus; David, dancing before the Ark, pleased with being thereby made the subject of mockery on the part of Michol, daughter of King Saul.

Yet he insisted that humility should be obedient, on the principle laid down by Saint Paul that Jesus *had emptied himself..... becoming obedient.* He would say: The measure by which to weigh true humility, is obedience! If you obey your superiors promptly, frankly, with pleasure,

without murmur, remonstrance or reply, then you are truly humble ; at the same time it is difficult to be truly humble without obedience, for obedience implies submission, and the truly humble looks upon himself as inferior and subject to all creatures for the love of Jesus Christ, and looks to every one as his superiors, holding himself as *the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people.* (Ps. xxi. 7).

Blessed Francis wished those under his direction to quicken their actions with the spirit of humility, and to hide from the eyes of men, as much as possible their good deeds, wishing to have God alone to witness them. Yet, he would not allow people to be in dread of their actions being seen by men. He loved a humility that was noble, magnanimous, full of courage, neither cowardly nor timid. He abhorred that any one should be prompted by the love of praise, also he would not permit one to abstain from a good act from the fear of gaining esteem by it. "They must needs be weak brains, indeed, to whom the smelling of a rose gives head-ache," was his saying.

He recommended that none should ever speak of himself either good or bad: in either case one speaks from the prompting of vanity. As regards one vaunting himself, it is so amusing that the grossest minds laugh at it. But, as regards one depreciating himself unless he actually feels his own inferiority, it is an act of superfine vanity : for, it is very rare, indeed, that one speaking thus either believes what he says or wishes to be believed : generally speaking, they only wish to be thought humble, and they are like the man at the oar who turns his back to the goal of his journey.

XI.—WHAT CARES A BISHOP SHOULD HAVE OF TEMPORALITIES.

I once expressed a scruple to blessed Francis about my

neglecting the temporalities of my See, leaving their management to my stewards, yet feeling that I should be obliged one day to give an account of them to God: still I knew nothing at all about business.

"And I," said he, "I never ask any account of him who manages my revenues, and have good reason to trust him more than I would myself, because besides his being a man of tried honesty, he understands such matters more than I do, and were I to take matters in hand I would ruin every thing."

"Yet," said I, "it is not as with such other properties, of which one may dispose as he chooses. But how can I let *this* patrimony go? Certes, should I be forced to enter a law-suit, it would be unpleasant to me, I speak of my personal patrimony; and yet in what regards the service of God, I could not abate one jot of my rights."

He laughed heartily at my remark. "In your opinion, your family patrimony is less God's own than your ecclesiastical benefice. Have you forgotten the Psalm that says—*The earth is the Lord's?* And do you believe that it is allowed to squander one's personal property, and we shall not be called to account for the administration thereof?

"You remind me of a certain great lord, who possessed a vast fortune. He was so attached to his riches that he was generally looked upon as a penurious man, the more so because he had no children, nor any prospect of them. He had a brother Archbishop, who was all the other way, so prodigal and lavish that he was always in debt, and often his kitchen pot was empty. One day a gentleman remarked to my lord, that his brother the Archbishop kept a princely suite and threw money away. 'I know it,' replied the other, 'but he holds his *benefice* only during his lifetime.' 'And for how many lives do you, sir, hold your marquisates and your possessions?' rejoined the gentleman with some asperity.

"Now that worthy man was not of your opinion; but he thought that Church property is not to be looked after, whereas a family patrimony is to be held as a thing sacred. No, we should look upon both with the same eye, God being the giver of both, and we the administrators, not the squanderers, appointed by Him."

"Set aside the family inheritance," I replied: "it is the administration of church benefices that weighs upon my heart. Would you go to law in case some one interfered with the revenues of your bishopric?"

"Most assuredly; I'll sell the patena to defend the chalice?"

"What! would you appear in court?"

"Yes, if it were necessary. Yet, as I receive my income through the hands of an agent, I would likewise sue through a lawyer. But I would employ my pen and leave no stone unturned to defend the patrimony which belongs to my Cross."

"What, then, of our apostolical principle—*him that taketh away from thee thy cloak, forbid him not to take thy coat also.*—(Luke vi. 29)?"

"Do you not see that it is the question of *our own* cloak? But the *benefice*, to whom does it belong?—to you or to the church? I avow, that as regards the income accruing therefrom, I would not put me much out of the way. It is as with one's beard—the more you shave it the thicker it grows; and so the more water you draw at the spring the clearer it becomes. But when stones are thrown into a well, as those people of Palestine did against Abraham, then it is time to begin the defence. Therefore, I say, we must take up arms when the friends are attacked, or an attempt made to mine the foundation of the house which we are sworn to protect. Remember St. Bernard's opinion on the subject. He says that good Bishops govern their temporality through

stewards, but the charge of the spiritual they take upon themselves; whereas bad Bishops look after temporal things, exacting strict accounts from tenants and farmers, whilst the spiritual are left in the hands of Vicars-General without any trouble to themselves. In fact, if Bishops are relieved by the Pastors of a part of their charge in the spiritual administration of the diocese, how far better for them to leave to the care of the stewards the temporal administration thereof, so that they may have more leisure to attend to prayer and study the ministration of the Word and of the Sacraments, and the exercise of other episcopal duties. They should apply to themselves those words of the King to Abraham, *Give me the persons, and the rest take to thyself* (Gen. xiv. 21.), and *Is not the life more than the meat and the body more than the raiment?*—(Matt. vi. 25)?"

XII.—HURRY IN OUR ACTIONS,

Was called by our Saint the plague of devotion. Devotion is a sweet and tranquil fervor, while "hurry" is but an indecent and turbulent fuss, setting everything awry. Above all, he blamed huddling things together, as if we could thread many needles at one and the same time. Who undertakes two things at once will succeed in neither. He applied himself to the one thing he had on hand, as if he had nothing else in the world to do, or rather as if it was the last act of his life. Some remonstrated with him for spending long hours with common people, who entertained him with their petty concerns, but he replied, "These concerns seem of importance to them, and wish to be advised accordingly. God knows well that I do not live for employment that will outwardly shine. All occupations are indifferent to me, provided they regard God's service. While engaged in these petty duties, I am not bound to

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attend to greater ones. Is it not a very great work to be doing the will of God?"

We impart to small acts the highest value, when we perform them with a sincere wish to please God. The merit of our actions does not depend from their importance, but from the love with which we perform them.

XIII.—ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

How shall we act when we are deprived of God's consolations, and do no not sensibly feel the influence of his Divine Presence? Then is the time to prove whether we follow Christ for the sake of bread, like the crowds that followed him to the desert, or whether we have courage enough to say with Thomas, *Let us go and die with him.* How apt we are to love him on Thabor and desert him at the Calvary! We are like swallows flying from the cold regions of adversity to the warm clime of prosperity.

You should thank God when he withdraws the sensible presence of his consolations, like a good soldier who thanks his commander, when he details him for some arduous and perilous duty, because it is a proof of how much confidence is placed in his bravery and fidelity. The evil spirit understood these principles well, when he addressed God on the subject of Job, thus: *Put forth thy hand, and touch his bone and his flesh, and then thou shalt see, that he will curse thee to thy face.* (Job ii. 5) But Job stood the trial, and grew stronger by it—he stood it like a rock, lashed by the fury of surging waves. Yet it is also true that we should bless God in the midst of consolations, even as the Psalmist sings: *I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall be always in my mouth* (Ps. xxiii. 1,); or as Job did: *The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.* (i. 21.)

The babe's eyes dance with joy because his mother gives

him sugar, but he cries when she takes it away lest baby get sick. Why is the baby thankful ? because he craves the sugar. Why does the baby cry ? because he knows no better. Our portrait exactly. Ah, but we poorly re-echo the cries of the saints, who, in the abundance of heavenly consolations, loudly cried, *Leave me, O Lord, leave me ;* or, *Too much, O Lord, too much, for a mortal to bear* : or as Blessed Francis himself often exclaimed, *Hold back, O Lord, the flood of thy favors, I am overwhelmed and I shall be drowned !*

We should always be thankful for this withdrawal of God's consolations, because :

1st.—We must in everything bless the dispositions of his Providence ;

2nd.—He disposes everything for our best ;

3rd.—Everything is for the best in those who love him ;

4th.—We are children of the Cross, and should rejoice in the participation of the sufferings of Our Saviour Jesus Christ.

5th.—On desolation and aridity we prove our fidelity ;

6th.—Too much consolation begets the worm of self-satisfaction, which engenders pride, the poison of the soul, corrupting all good acts ;

7th.—In too much consolation, we are apt to loose sight of God, and centre our intentions and aims in those very consolations—a very skilful ruse in the hands of the devil.

All which is summed up by our Saint in these words : "When God occasionally deprives us of consolations, and of a sensible influence of his divine presence, it is done for the purpose that our heart be no more holden by what is feasible, but only by him alone and by his divine pleasure, according as he did with her who wished to hold him, kneeling at his feet, and to whom he said : *Do not touch me..... but go to my brethren, &c.* (John xx. 17.)

XIV.—SICKNESS IS A PROFITABLE STATE.

A certain wealthy nobleman, who made ill use of his riches to indulge his passions, fell sick, and was near dying. Our good Bishop was entreated to pray for him; but he gravely replied: "He set no value on the merit of good works, and now feels the consequence of evil deeds. He was often told by his physicians that his excesses were undermining his life. May God grant that the sickness of the body lead him to recover the health of the soul! he will lose nothing by the change. God knows how to prick the bubble, and console a heart with the true joy of repentance, and strengthen it with his sovereign spirit. Tell him to be of good cheer, this sickness is not unto death: he will live. But tell him also that if he does not mend his ways, something worse will befall him."

Which words being reported to the sick man, both cheered him and produced a very salutary and edifying change in his life. As he recovered, he returned thanks to God in the church, and then called on blessed Francis, who said to him: "See; often do these evils befall us through the justice of God, acting in accordance with his mercy, in order that as we do not perform many voluntary acts of atonement for our sins, we may be forced into the performance of some, against our will. But blessed is he who knows how to profit by them and makes virtue of necessity. God does not always bestow so much grace, nor always manifest his justice with so much goodness. Be thankful that his rod has chastised you with a fatherly hand. It is meet that you should be humbled a little, that you may better appreciate his just dispensations."

XV.—WE CANNOT HAVE TOO MUCH DESIRE OF SPIRITUAL GOODS.

Our blessed Bishop set great value on good wishes, and

he was wont to remark that on a good use of them depends the whole progress of our spiritual edifice. He would quote as emblems of this truth those mysterious birds spoken of by the Prophet, always flying onward, and never returning on their track ; also, those telling words of St. Paul: *One thing I do : forgetting the things that are behind and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark to the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus* (Phil. iii. 3). In truth the cravings of divine love can never be satisfied, for divine love admits of ever increasing intensity in this life, its state of perfect complement to be attained only in heaven. He often quoted with fervid feelings those words of Bernard : AMO QUIA AMO, AMO UT AMEM, *I love because I love, I love that I may love yet more.* There can be no true love of God without an ardent and ever-increasing desire to love him more.

XVI.—HOW BLESSED FRANCIS MET ANOTHER COMPLAINT OF THE BISHOP OF BELLEY.

I once complained of some tort received from persons highly esteemed for their virtue. "Do you not know," said he, "that the bees which deposit the most honey sting most cruelly. Just think, who was the traitor of Jesus ! and did not Jesus complain through one of his prophets, that the wounds of his body had been inflicted in the house of his friends ? Those persons are virtuous, but misled by a false zeal. Believe me, when they see the truth they will do you justice. There are twenty-four hours in the day, and enough is for each the malice thereof. Beg of God to enlighten them and to grant you deliverance from the calumny of men. After all, a true Christian should bless those who curse him, pray for those who persecute him, return good for evil, if he wishes to be the child of the

heavenly Father, who *maketh the sun rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and unjust* (Matt. v. 45). Lastly pour your heart before God in prayer and cry MALEDICENT ET TU BENEDICES, *They will revile but thou shalt bless.*" And he added, that if the complaint was not just and the evil not great and pressing, I should be blamed, for I betrayed a very touchy disposition. I do not believe, for his part, he ever complained, nor do I think he liked to hear complaints against one another. He compared such people to the child, who, in showing a wounded finger, is quieted by some one blowing over it and feigning to cry. And yet the world is full of complaints, for the most, however, invented, imaginary, or the work of affectation: witness the woman who went into mourning at the news of her husband's death, but when assured of his being alive, would not throw away the weeds, averring that they became her better than any other dress. Our sufferings dwindle into nothing when examined before the cross of Jesus Christ. What soldier will ever complain of his pains, when his chief endures so much?

If we have not strength and determination enough to stifle our sufferings within our bosoms, nor fervor enough to endure them with joy, let us, at least, pour our grievances into strong breasts, that will afford us relief, and not weaken our resolution by overwrought sympathy.

To a woman who complained of her husband, because when he was well he left her and went to the wars, and when he came home sick and wounded, he was cross and peevish, "Well," said our Saint, "In what sauce shall we cook you? He cannot stay with you when he is well, and you cannot stay with him when he is sick. But, if you loved each other in God, you would not be subject to these feelings; your affection would always be the same, whether present or absent, sick or well. Fervently beg this gift of

God; for unless you have it I despair of your ever having any rest."

XVII.—PERFECT RESIGNATION SUBMITS TO GOD'S WILL IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES.

When, in 1619, our Saint went to Paris with the Prince of Savoy, a gentleman of the Court fell there dangerously sick. He sent for our Bishop, and, while he bore his sufferings with great patience, he fretted about things of very little consequence; whereupon the Prelate remarked, "How inconsistent! This man is a brave soldier and a great statesman, and yet he frets at trifles." Albeit, he was perfectly resigned to, and contented with, his condition, he now regretted to die away from home; then that he could not give his family his last blessing; again, that his family physician should not be with him. He was often harassed by the most minute details of his funeral, the words of his epitaph, and all such things. He would find fault with the Parisian sky, with physicians and nurses and the apothecary, with his servants, with his bed, with his chambers; in a word, "The thought that he could not die amid such circumstances as he wished," said our Saint, "made him unhappy!" And, from all that was done and said to make him comfortable, he will torture his mind to find new sources of complaint. At last he died a Christian and happy death. Referring to those said circumstances blessed Francis made the following remark to me: "It is not enough to wish that which God willeth: we must desire it all as God wills it, and in all its circumstances. For instance, in the case of sickness, we should wish to be sick, because so it pleases God, and sick of that very sickness, not of one of a different character, and sick at such time and in such place, and surrounded by such attendants as it may please God. In short, we must in all things take for our law the most holy will of God."

XVIII.—HOW HE WAS FAVORED WITH CONSOLATIONS.

"Did you know," said the Bishop to a person greatly in his confidence, "how God deals with my heart, you would thank him for his goodness, and beg of him to grant me the spirit of counsel and fortitude, to enable me to correspond to the injunctions of his wisdom and intellect."

Again: "Oh! but *good must God be to them that are of a right heart*, whilst he is so good to me, whose heart is so miserable, so unfaithful to his graces, so clinging to earth! Indeed his spirit is sweet to those who love Him and earnestly seek after Him, and His *name is as oil poured out;* no wonder that bold and holy hearts follow Him with so much devotedness and run after him *at the odor of His ointments.* The unction of the Lord teaches us great things, and, with a light so sweet that it is difficult to distinguish which is the most agreeable, the brightness or the sweetness. But, O God! I tremble for fear he has given me my heaven in this world; for I do not know what adversity is. I have never become acquainted with the presence of poverty. Whatever pains I may have had, they were only scratches on the skin. Calumnies, like the wind, died away with their sound (*a*). It is not much to be exempt from evils; but I have an abundance of spiritual and temporal goods, and yet in the midst of all this I am insensible of my own ingratitude. Oh! help me to thank God, and to pray that I may not have my best luck here below."

And again: "God knows my weakness well, and deals with me as with an infant, with sugar-plums and no hard biscuits. When will he, after so much indulgence, admit

(*a*) Yet St. Francis of Sales was made the butt of long and relentless persecutions, by high and low; and his character was blackened most cruelly. Three long years he suffered from a base and heartless slander.

me to breathe under his cross, since one cannot rejoice with him unless he suffers with him also? In truth, one must either love him or die—or rather die in order to love him; that is, to die to all loves, that one may live only on his love, and live only for him who died to secure for us a life eternal in the arms of his goodness."

Yet more: "O! but it is sweet to live only in God, work in God, and rejoice in God! With God's help, I will never more cling to any person, and love any one, or wish to be loved by any, except in God and for God alone. I hope to accomplish all this after I have bravely humbled myself before him. God be praised (*a*)! I feel as if all things were nought to me but in God, and yet for him and in him I love souls even more tenderly. Oh! when shall this natural love for one's blood, and ease, and comfort, and acquaintances, and sympathies, and favors,—when shall it be purified and made entirely subordinate to the pure love and good pleasure of God? When will our self-love cease to rely on external resources, on the comfort of outward sympathy and approbation? When will it become perfectly contented with the unchangeable and unmovable assurance which God affords us in his perpetuity? What can an outward comfort or sympathy add to the love which God has engendered, and which he nourishes and keeps alive? What marks of durability can be wanted in that union which God has created? Near or far the steadfastness of a love nourished in the bosom of God shall remain unchanged.

XIX. BE CALM IN THE MIDST OF A STORM.

Not in fair weather, but in the midst of a storm does a pilot prove his skill. Thus, common souls will lead a good life when everything agrees with their wishes; but true

(*a*) Vive Dieu.

virtue shows its mettle amid trials and contradictions. The more our blessed Prelate was contradicted, the more he exhibited his calmness, like the palm-trees, whose roots are made the strongest by the fiercest wind. He was a Samson who gathered honey out of the lion's mouth, and found peace in war. Like the three children, he enjoyed refreshing dews in roaring furnaces, gathered roses among thorns, and enjoyed the sweetest happiness in the most bitter bitterness.

Once he said to me: "Since so much opposition and secret manœuvres have besieged me in my tranquillity, I never enjoyed such sweet and calm peace, which all foretells the perfect rest of my soul in her God; and this is the sincere and greatest ambition of my heart."

XX. CONCERNING THOSE WHO WISH TO DIE.

To those who wish to know whether it is wrong to desire death, I will answer with Blessed Francis that "it is always dangerous to wish to die, for such desires are formed only by persons of the highest perfection, or by dejected and grovelling souls. True, David, St. Paul, and other Saints have desired death, but it would be very presumptuous to place ourselves on a par with such when we have not their virtues. To conceive such a wish, when laboring under the influence of sadness or dejection, is akin to despair.

But, some will say, we desire death because we wish to offend God no more. It must needs be a wonderful hate of sin to prompt a soul to wish that which the Saints desired only for the sake of enjoying God, to give him greater glory and not for the purpose of offending him no more. Be that as it may, in the soul of persons not prompted by the loftiest motives, there is always some other motive arising from circumstances which render this life unpleasant.

On the other hand, do you wish to die, in order to go to

heaven ? But to secure that place not only you must not sin, but you must live so as to please God and deserve reward at his hand. Or, do you wish to go to Purgatory ? Eh ! were you at its gates you would wish to beat a speedy retreat, and have years of mortal life granted to you in order to do penance and avoid these sufferings.

PART ELEVENTH.

I.—ONE MORE COMPLAINT OF THE BISHOP OF BELLEY.

I complained to Blessed Francis of a glaring outrage offered to me. He replied: "To any one else I should address words of sympathy; but your position and my love for you relieve me of the necessity of being this much civil to you. I have no balm to pour over your wound: should I sympathize with you, may be the sore would become inflamed. I have only vinegar and salt to apply in your case. You say, one must have a prodigious and tried patience to bear such attacks without murmur. Indeed, your patience cannot be of very hard temper, when you complain so loudly."

"But, my Father, it is only into your ear and heart—to whom shall any child have recourse, when in trouble, but to his father?

"Oh! oh! truly a child! and when, pray, will you emerge from your infancy? He, who should be a father to others, and to whom God has given the place of Father in his church, to play the baby! One may speak as a child, St. Paul says, as long as he is a child, but not after he became a man: pleasant is the lisp of a baby sucking at its mother's breast, but it becomes unpleasant on the lips of one who is a baby no more. Do you wish me to give you pap, instead of solid food, and to blow on your wound? Are your teeth not strong enough to cut hard bread, the bread of sorrow? Indeed, it is not becoming to lay your complaints before a terrestrial father—you, who should repeat

with David, *I was dumb, and I opened not my mouth, because Thou hast done it.* (Ps. 38). But, you say, it is not God that has done it, but a set of bad men. Ahem! have you forgotten that the permissive will of God allows wicked men to assail the just in order that the latter may correct himself or practice the virtue of patience? Job knew more than you; he said: *The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away*: he did not accuse devil or thief. He only acknowledges the hand of him who does what he wills, and by whatever instruments he choses. Indeed, you are a different man from him who kissed the rod that smote him, and confessed he had received comfort therefrom—that he was a man without help, and abandoned, yet *free among the dead—as a deaf man*, he *heard not—as a dumb man not opening his mouth*, had *no reproof* against those who reviled him. He kept silent and humbled himself, and the bold words were choked in his throat, which might have justified him completely and asserted his innocence. I know you will say, how long, father, since you have changed from the kindest of directors into so severe an one? Where are your old sympathies?—Indeed, they still exist as fresh and as strong as ever. For, God knows whether I love you, or love myself more than I do you. I have chided you as I would have done my own soul had it cut such pranks. It is certain that you do not like this trial, otherwise you would not complain, for we are not apt to complain of that which we like. Man of little faith and less patience! Ah! what has become of the Gospel that teaches us to offer our left cheek to him who strikes the right one, to give our coat to him that taketh away our cloak? what of the beatitudes? What of the prayer to be offered for those who persecute us? What of that LOVE YOUR ENEMIES? Are these mere ornaments or are they not the seals we have to put upon our heart, and upon our

arm, our thoughts and our works to prove ourselves faithful to the spouse? Well, I pardon you *by indulgence*, as St. Paul has it: but upon condition that you will be more courageous in future. Shut up in the ark of silence favors of this kind when God will be pleased to give you any such, and be wary lest their perfume be wantoning in the air. Be thankful that God deems you worthy of carrying at least a portion of the Cross of his Son. What! you are proud of the golden cross you carry on your breast, and cannot bear a little cross in your heart, but must get rid of it by complaints. You boast of patience at the very moment you lose it, and you wish that I should look upon you as very patient at the very moment I hear you murmuring, as if the greatest triumph of patience consisted in not taking revenge, and not in being silent. For the rest it seems to me you had no right to invoke the aid of the great genius of patience in an affair so small, that a little silence and modesty would have done all the work."

I was floored, but in my fall I felt so strengthened that the insult lost all its sting, and never since have I bestowed one word of complaint on any affront I may have suffered.

In one of his letters our Bishop writes: "Nothing will give us so much tranquillity in this world, as a frequent consideration of the afflictions, wants, contempt, calumnies and insults endured by our Divine Saviour, from his birth to his painful death. In the face of so much bitterness, is it not wrong for us to qualify the trifling accidents of our lives as adversities, trials and insults? I say, we ought to be ashamed to beg God to grant us patience in affairs of so little importance, when a very little dose of modesty would prove strong enough to make us endure peacefully all the insults we pretend to have received."

II.—ABOUT PERSONS OF GOOD DISPOSITION.

"If you are naturally well disposed, remember that such good natural dispositions are gifts for the good use whereof you shall have to give an account. Take great care, then, to employ them in the service of him who has been pleased to give them to you. Engraft on those seedlings the scion of that eternal love, which God will presently give to you, provided you prepare yourself to receive it by a perfect self-denial." Thus did our Saint speak on this matter.

There are persons who are well disposed towards the practice of certain virtues, and will easily possess them, provided they are faithful in practising their acts. Even pagan philosophers attained a certain degree of perfection in the possession of some natural virtues, which they were constant in practising, and could be practised by the exertion of their natural power; just as a natural adaptation of the body will aid to attain perfection in certain mechanical professions. Yet, we should never forget that these natural good dispositions will never profit our soul, unless they are made to work co-ordinately to its eternal salvation.

III.—ONE MAY BE BOTH DEVOUT AND WICKED.

Our Saint often said so, and he entreated those under his direction not to deceive themselves.

"But, dear Bishop, that would be hypocrisy."

"Not at all; I mean devotion.—Devotion in itself, and of its own nature, is only an acquired natural virtue, not one divine and infused: otherwise, we should call it *theological*, which would be an error. Devotion is a virtue subordinate to the virtue of religion: in fact it is properly said to be one of its acts, in the same manner as religion is subordinate to the cardinal virtue, called justice. Now

you know very well that all moral virtues, and even faith and hope, theological virtues as they are, can be compatible with mortal sin, albeit they are helpless, being deprived of the soul of charity, that must needs give them life. Now, if one can have faith, and so great an one as to move mountains, albeit he be without charity; if even a wicked man can be a prophet like Saul, and Balaam, and Caiphas; if even miracles can be performed by such a man as Judas; if one can bestow all his earthly goods on the poor, and even undergo the martyrdom of fire without being prompted by charity, many more can very easily be *devout* and very much so, and at the same time wicked and very wicked, inasmuch as devotion is a virtue far less valued than such others whose acts we have above mentioned. Indeed, as there is not the least doubt that one can have faith and mercy, and patience and perseverance to the degree I have described, and yet be possessed by some capital sin, as envy and hatred and the like, so one can be at the same time very devout and very wicked."

"Who then is the truly devout man?"

"I have told you that one can, even when possessed by such vices, be truly devout, and have true devotion, although a dead one."

"But is a dead devotion a true one?"

"Yes, as true as a corpse is a true body, albeit without life."

"But that lifeless body is not a veritable man.

"It is not a man wholly and perfect; yet it is the true body of a true man, although dead: thus devotion without charity is dead, indeed, and yet it is true devotion. It is a true devotion, dead and inefficient, but not a true living and efficient one. Charity makes man good, and devotion makes him devout. In losing charity he exchanges the first quality for that of wickedness, but he does not lose the

second : hence I said that one can be both devout and wicked, and the more so because mortal sin does not carry with it the loss of all good habits, nor of faith and hope, unless one be guilty of formal infidelity and despair."

IV.—DEVOTION MUST BE ADAPTED TO ONE'S OCCUPATIONS IN LIFE.

If one's devotion clashed in the least with the performance of one's duties, in the respective sphere of life, our Saint would at once call it *false*. Like the water that takes the form of the vase into which it is poured, so true devotion will take all shapes and forms according as one is situated in life. Thus to be devout in performing the work of every one's life means, to fulfil all our duties and all our acts with fervor, in the presence of God, directing all to his greatest glory, and doing all in our power to please him above all. This motive or intention of our actions is an act of worship belonging to the virtue of religion, but charity alone inspires that promptness and alacrity and feeling with which we should perform our actions. Acting thus, we prove perfectly devout in our state of life, and serve God through love, as he wishes to be served. Thus we are *after his heart*, and walk *according to his divine will*

St. Thomas and St. Augustine distinguish three classes of devout people :

1. Beginners—who abstain from sin, drive away temptations, and practice internal and external mortification and acts of virtue, but with effort and some pain.

2. The proficient—who feel more at ease than the former, yet, although they run after the call of the Lord, meet at times with obstacles and hard work.

NOTE.—This doctrine is developed more at length in the first chapter of the "Introduction to a Devout Life."

3. The perfect—feel extreme joy and perfect happiness in doing all those acts which are so painful to beginners.

The first are rather sluggish, the second are quicker, but the third run and fly. (*a*)

V.—ABOUT INTERIOR RECOLLECTION AND THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE HEART.

Our Saint was wont to call interior recollection, the concentration of all the powers of the soul into one's heart, there to deal with God, alone and heart to heart, a thing that can be done in all places and at all hours, without let or hindrance from company or occupation. These, our frequent glances at God and God's glances at us, marvellously aid us to do what is right, keep us from falling and quickly help us to rise after our fall. These risings of the heart towards heaven, honest aspirations after God, are like so many wounds holily inflicted upon the heart of God (Cant. iv. 9). This intercourse between our heart and God was said by the Bishop to be as necessary to the soul as "inspiration" and "respiration" are to the body. All our practices of devotion, without this constant practice of the heart, are like a sky without stars, or a tree without leaves. Were a person prevented from performing his meditation, by a justifiable cause one should supply by frequent darts of the heart and very frequent aspirations of the soul. By such means much ruin is repaired, and great progress in virtue is achieved.

VI.—ABOUT CONFRATERNITIES.

He advised his people to enter all religious confraternities

(*a*) ("BLESSED are they *who* WALK *in the Law of the Lord.* (Ps. cxviii, 1); but far MORE BLESSED, indeed, those who having received the *blessing* of the *lawgiver shall go from virtue to virtue.* (lxxxiii, 8): but *MOST BLESSED* of all those who *RUN the way of God's commandments, when He did change their heart.* (cxviii, 32)." From Fr Roothaan's ed. of Spir. Exerc., 1842, p. 2, note 3.—Transl.)

of the place where they lived in order to share the benefits of all. "Keep not out of them," he would say, "from fear lest you could not comply with all their rules for they are not an obligation, but only a suggestion: for if there are rules in monastic communities, which do not oblige under mortal or even venial sin, how much less such an obligation can be attached to the regulations of confraternities. Whatever is recommended by confraternities is not a precept but a suggestion or advice. To be sure, those who practice such acts of devotion gain indulgences, which are lost to those who practice them not, but without the least shadow of sin. There is much to be gained but nothing to lose." He wondered at the little number of those who joined these associations; some, he remarked, kept away from scruple, lest they should engage to do that which they might not be able to fulfil; others from want of religion, treating as hypocrites those who belong to them.

VII. LOVE TO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD.

According to our Saint, it is a mark of predestination to be fond of hearing the word of God. For, those who are God's, love to hear his word, and who loveth God loveth his word and keepeth it in his heart. The good sheep knows the voice of its shepherd, and the voice of the shepherd is well known to the good sheep, that will one day hear the words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father;" yet we should not be fond of the word of God from a vain desire: we must make it bear fruits of virtue in our heart. He often said that God lent a kind hearing to our prayer, according as we are faithful in practicing what we are told by the lips of his ambassadors.

VIII.—PIOUS READING

Was recommended by our Saint as the nourishment of the

soul—a food always at our command; whilst preaching is not always within our reach, nor have we always a spiritual director near at hand, and we are not able to remember all that we have heard for our spiritual welfare. Pious books excite the fire of divine love in our hearts, and we should keep a supply of them by us, and read them every day. We should read them with great reverence and devotion, as if they were so many letters the Saints send to us from Heaven to show us the way thither, and to encourage us to walk over it. The "dead" who speak to us through their writings are most trusty directors. During their lives they generally were the ambassadors of God, dispensers of his law, and interpreters of his will. After death they continue to fulfil their mission. Difficult passages and occasional obscurity is met in their writings; but then we have able and enlightened men near us who will assist us in understanding all. Above all, Francis counselled reading the Lives of the Saints, which he was wont to call "The Gospel in Practice." Such readings, performed with humility and a desire to imitate, invariably impart sentiments of devotion to our heart. Like industrious bees, we shall draw from so many good examples the honeycomb of a virtuous life. The working of the spirit of God is varied, indeed; and for this very reason we will always find in the Lives of the Saints something needed to our individual spiritual wants. And, should we only be impressed with feelings of admiration for the heroic deeds of the Saints, would not even that be a very excellent way of giving praise to God?

IX. CONFESSION AND COMMUNION.

These two Sacraments were styled by him the Two Poles of Christian Life, which revolves itself around them. One purifies the soul, the other sanctifies it. He greatly

admired the saying of St. Bernard, who insisted upon his brethren to acknowledge that all the spiritual good they possessed was derived from the frequent use of the Sacraments. He would say that those who found excuses in order to absent themselves from the Sacraments are not unlike the people of the parable, who did not accept the invitation to attend the marriage feast, and thus incurred the wrath of the Lord, who had prepared it. Some say, "We are not good enough;" but how will they become good when they keep aloof from the source of all goodness? Others, "We are too weak;" but is not this the bread of the strong? Again, "We are infirm;" and have you not here the physician? Again, "We are not worthy;" but does not the Church direct the holiest of men to hail the approach of the feast with the words, *O Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof?* To those who plead their being overwhelmed with affairs, He cries, *Come to me all you that labor and are burdened and I will refresh you* (Matt. xi. 28.)—Such as fear to incur their condemnation, will they not be condemned for keeping away? Lastly, the plea of humility is as false as that of Achaz, who detracted from the glory of God by feigning fear of tempting him. What better means to learn how to receive him well than to receive him often, according as we learn to perform certain acts well by repeating them?

X.—TRUE DEVOTION CONSISTS WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE DUTIES OF ONE'S STATE IN LIFE.

Our blessed Bishop loudly blamed those persons who make a profession of piety, and yet neglect to acquire those virtues which are proper in their condition to life, and study those which do not belong to it—an inordination this, he said, springing from the distaste felt by men of those conditions to which they must submit from duty. Relaxation

creeps into the cloisters, because their inmates neglect the virtues proper of their life, and content themselves with those which belong to a secular life; whereas great troubles will mar the happiness of a secular home by affecting the practices and devotions of the cloister. What a mistake, to praise a family by calling it a true religious house, wherein they live as if in a convent! It is like going forth a-gathering figs from thorns and grapes from thistles. Of course, all such practices are good and holy; but they must take their impress from the circumstances of places, time, persons, and conditions. Charity is no more charity when out of order; it is a fish out of water; it is a climate under which it cannot shine. These preposterous spirits were compared by him to those gluttons who wish for fresh cherries at Christmas, and for ice in July, instead of enjoying contentedly the bounties of the earth, each in its season. Brains thus deranged need a purge, but you cannot reason with them.

XI.—HIS ESTIMATE OF VIRTUES.

A. Those virtues, the practice whereof is more frequent, common, and ordinary, he preferred to others, which we may be called upon to practice only on rare occasions.

B. The greater or smaller degree of the supernaturalness in virtue is not to be judged by its external act, inasmuch as a little act may be performed with a great deal of grace and charity, whilst one of great brilliancy may be animated by very feeble love of God, which, after all, is the only rule by which to fix its true value before God.

C. The more universal a virtue is, the more it is to be preferred, charity excepted. For instance, he valued Prayer, the light that illumines all other virtues; Devotion, which consecrates all our actions to God; Humility making us set

little value on ourselves and our actions; Meekness yielding to all; Patience endorsing everything—more than munificence, or magnanimity, or liberality, because these latter are practiced only more rarely, and affect fewer objects.

D. He was always on his guard against brilliant virtues, which, of their nature, give a hold to vainglory, the greatest bane of all virtues.

E. He blamed such as form their opinion of virtues by the standard set up by common minds, who prefer temporal to spiritual alms, hair-cloth, fasting, and corporal austerity to sweetness, modesty, and the mortification of the heart, which are by far more excellent virtues.

F. He greatly condemned those who perform only those virtues, which are to their taste, regardless of those which are more particularly adapted to their state of life. They serve God after a way of their own, but not according to his will—an abuse that exists to a great extent, and by which many persons, otherwise devout, are led astray from the right path.

PART TWELFTH.

I.—IT IS SINFUL TO COMPLAIN.

Qui se plaint, pèche.—This was a common saying of our blessed Bishop, and here is how he understood it: He did not deny the propriety or justice of entering such complaints as will redress a wrong done to us. But he condemned murmuring, because such is always prompted by feelings of self-love, and self-love is greatly given to magnifying the wrong we may have received, employing strong language to describe offences, which in others we would look upon as of small account. He never reproved a tranquil or peaceful prosecution to obtain redress for outrages committed upon our houses, person, or goods. But such is human weakness that it is very difficult to bridle one's feelings so as not to lose our equanimity; hence the proverb:—not an ounce of friendship in a hundred pounds of litigation.

Moreover, he expected that in case of sickness we would tell our ailments with great simplicity, it being the will of God that we should honor the physician.

Outside such cases of sickness and of justice, he regarded complaining generally useless, and often unjust, it being extremely difficult for him who suffered from injustice or sickness not to overstep the bounds of truth or equity. For whether such evils arise from malice or accident, we must never lose sight of the supreme cause, which is the will of God, who employs either power—the former by permission, the second by an absolute dispensation, and both either to correct or to make us advance in virtue; and, therefore, our complaints will ultimately reflect, in some way or other, against God.

Those who have waited on our honored Father in divers attacks of sickness, and even watched by his death-bed, have testified that he never uttered a word of complaint; but he merely stated the symptoms of his malady, as he felt them, in a careful and plain manner, giving himself up to the management of his physicians, taking most readily whatever they prescribed, not only without apparent repugnance, but even with signs of pleasure.

II.—HOW TO PROFIT BY INSULTS.

He was wont to say that amidst affronts and injuries we gather a harvest of virtues, inasmuch as a splendid opportunity is thereby offered to perform such acts, as follows:—

1. Of *Justice:* for who is there that has not sinned, and hence deserved punishment? Have you been offended? Think of how often you have offended God! It is meet, then, that the creatures, the instruments of his justice, should punish you.

2. But were you accused justly? Simply acknowledge your fault, and beg God's pardon as well as men's, and be grateful to those who accuse you, if even they have done it with bad grace; remember that medicines, however unpleasant, are not the less salutary.

3. And were you accused falsely? Give testimony to the truth peacefully and calmly. We owe it to the edification of our neighbors, who might, from our silence, draw motives to believe the charge.

4. Then, if after all, they still persevere in accusing you, give up any farther defence of yourself; make wrath give way, by the practice of silence, modesty, and patience.

5. *Prudence* has its own part in the struggle, inasmuch as an insult is silenced by contempt. Should you oppose it

with wrath, it will look as if you acknowledged its truth ; then,

6. *Discretion* comes to the aid of prudence, by counselling moderation.

7. *Courage*, in all its power and grandeur, raises you above yourself.

8. *Temperance* bridles your passions and curbs them into submission.

9. *Humility* will make you value and love your humiliation.

10. *Faith* will, as St. Paul says, stop the mouths of lions and lift us up to contemplate JESUS CHRIST overwhelmed with insults and afflictions, and in the midst of them like a deaf and dumb man, having no reply to make.

11. *Hope* will hold before you an imperishable crown—the reward of a moment of trial and suffering.

12. *Charity*, at last, patient and sweet, benign and yielding, believing all, hoping all, enduring all, and suffering everything.

The more we value the importance of our eternal salvation, the better we will love the insults which are offered to us!

III.—HOW HE NOTICED WHAT WAS SAID AGAINST HIM.

They would, at times, rehearse before our Saint what had been said against him, and sometimes things very aggravating, indeed; but he would only remark, "And do they say no more? Indeed, they do not know all. They flatter me ; they are too sparing. It is evident that they feel more pity than anger towards me. Well, God be praised, we must endeavor to correct ourselves!.....if

even I am not guilty of that, I deserve a scolding in other respects." To those who took his defence, and averred that it was all false—"Well," he replied, "it is a warning, lest I should make it all true. I take it as a great charity that they have forewarned me about the danger of running against that rock." When he saw his friends getting excited in his defence, he remarked. "How now! have I retained you to plead my cause? Let them alone; after all, it is only a trial of words, a tribulation of wind; its recollection will perish with its sound. We must be very delicate not to be able to bear the buzz of a fly! Are we irreproachable? In all probability they see my faults better than I do myself or those who love me. Very often we are apt to call a truth which is distasteful to us slander."

"Certainly, we receive no harm because some have a bad opinion of ourselves; should we not hold the same opinion? Such people are not our enemies: nay, they act friendly to us, inasmuch as they take our side in destroying our self-love. Why should we join issue with those who come to our aid against an enemy so dangerous?

IV.—HAVE PATIENCE IN THE MIDST OF CALUMNIES.

He often repeated, with great warmth, that text of St. Paul: Do not revenge yourselves, *my dearly beloved, but give place unto wrath* (Rom. xii. 19.) He would say "A cannon ball becomes spent against a cotton bale, but it scattereth into shivers whatever offers a resistance. *A mild answer breaketh wrath* (Prov. xv. 1.), as water puts out a fire. Our Saviour gives the possession of the land to those who *are meek* (Matt. v.), for the meek man possesses the hearts of all." He counselled those who were smarting under the infliction of an injury to look up to Christ, who died, like a felon, on the cross. "There is seen the serpent made

of bronze, and without poison, whose sight will cure the wounds of calumny." With *that* example before one's eyes, who will dare complain or feel revengeful ?

But, what if our silence gives rise to scandal ? The answer is, that there are two kinds of scandal—active and passive. The wicked is guilty of the former, and the weak take the latter. A bad person gives scandal by his ungodly conduct; a good person may be the occasion of it, without any fault on his part, through being accused of crimes never committed. Thus was our Saviour called, *A rock of scandal* (I Peter ii. 8.); and he told his Apostles, *All of you will be scandalised in regard to me to-night* (Matt. xvi. 31.)

However, we may pray to God in the words of the royal Prophet: *O Lord, deliver my soul from wicked lips and a deceitful tongue* (Ps. cxix.)

V.—HOW TO SPEAK OF GOD.

"We should never speak of God, or on any subject related to him, but with great reverence, great sentiment, and deep feeling," said Blessed Francis. Again: "Always speak of God with great veneration and piety, not by way of discussion, but with tenderness, love, and humility."

The first advice affects those who speak of God, of his attributes, of the worship due him, without taking into account the circumstances of time and persons, just as they would talk of any common topic to "kill time." St. Jerome complained of this abuse; for, whilst there are masters and experts in every science and art, only on matters of Theology and Holy Scriptures, the foundations of all sciences and arts, few can speak properly; and yet questions relating to them are discussed most flippantly at table, and in public places; the hair-brained youth, the uneducated laborer, and the dotard give their opinions on the most recondite mysteries of our Faith.

Another class of people, to whom the second advice is especially applicable, wish to pass for persons of great knowledge in ascetic questions, and in matters of piety; they generally maintain their opinions with acrimony and flippancy, great conceit, and self-esteem, and will not brook contradiction.

Blessed Francis concluded thus: "Never speak of God or of religious subjects for the sake of talk or pastime, but always with great care and devotion. I give you this advice that you may be free from the remarkable vanity of those who make a profession of devotion and are in the habit of intruding religious topics everywhere most carelessly, and afterwards flatter themselves to be what people take them for, but, in fact, they are not."

VI.—ON RIDICULING.

He always expressed the most unpleasant sensation whenever words of ridicule were uttered in his presence. He strove to break the conversation at once; but, could he not succeed, he would rise and say: "It is too bad thus to trample on the good man; it is against all discretion. What right have we thus to laugh at the expense of others? How would we like to be thus treated, and have an autopsy of our weakness made with the scalpel of the tongue? While it is an act of great perfection to stand by our neighbor and throw a veil over his shortcomings, it is wicked thus to cut him up with ridicule. To indulge in mockery betrays a perverse mind, hated by the Lord, and by him often very severely punished.

Once a young lady amused herself at the expense of another who was born in deformity and had an ugly countenance. The Saint informed her that we are all made by God, whose works are perfect. But she did not take the hint and continued the raillery. Whereupon he said:

"Believe me, she has a perfect soul, correct mind, and fine heart: and let it be for your satisfaction that I know it well, and tell you so." The woman was abashed, and said no more.

On another occasion, another man who was a hunchback and otherwise greatly deformed, was the subject of mirth and unkind remarks. "Do you not know that all God's works are perfect?" said the prelate.

"How perfect, and his figure so distorted?" replied the other.

But he kindly replied: "Do you not think that God has made hunchbacks as perfect as persons with the straightest limbs?"

But as they wished him to explain whether he alluded to interior or exterior beauty, he simply said: "Let it suffice that what I say is true: let us talk of something better."

VII.—NEVER JUDGE OTHERS.

Man sees only the exterior, but God knows the interior also. To him alone belongs the right of sounding the heart and of knowing one's thoughts. "The soul of our neighbor," the Saint would say "is the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which we are forbidden to touch under great penalties." He averred a great inconsistency among men who would judge that of which they knew nothing, and neglected to judge the very subject they should know most thoroughly, to wit, their own interior. They seek that which they are forbidden to possess, and neglect what they are commanded to do. He compared them to the woman, who had made a point to do the contrary of her husband's wishes, and at last drowned herself. The man ordered the river to be dragged against the current, and to those who remonstrated he replied: Do you mean to tell me that she has lost her spirit of contradiction?

But is it wrong to entertain suspicions when there is reason for it? By no means, inasmuch as "to suspect" is not "to judge." But we cannot be on our guard enough, lest, surprised by false appearances, we fall into rash judgments. Blessed Francis here proposed as an excellent rule that when an action can be viewed from different points we should always chose that which showed it to the best advantage. If the act will not allow a defense, we can always lessen its guilt and excuse the intention (*a*): and in case we cannot excuse the intention, we can always appeal to the violence of the temptation, or the ignorance of the person, to his being taken by surprise, and of his probably being very weak, more weak than wicked, in a word, make any remarks and suggestions that will diminish the scandal.

Now ponder well on these words of blessed Francis: "I shall sum up all by telling you that those who take good care of their consciences are scarcely ever guilty of rash judgment. A rash judgment is the offspring of an idle soul, of a soul that does not look after her own wants, but likes to harp on the actions of others—all which is forcibly expressed by the ancient philosopher, who said 'that only those persons are fond of knowing the ins and outs of other people's life who are exceedingly careless in correcting the faults of their own.'"

VIII.—ABOUT BACKBITING.

It was the opinion of our Saint that could *backbiting* be banished from the world, a very large amount of sin would disappear at once. In fact sins are committed either by

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(*a*) "Grandma would take the devil's part, were he here!" said a young lady who was annoyed at not being able to drag her aged parent's opinion into her own." "If the poor fellow was here, it would be a comfort to him that somebody took his part;" replied grandmother.

thoughts, acts, or words : but the latter are often the most dangerous of all.

Our sins in thought are known only to God, and give no scandal, and an affectionate return, in penance and sorrow, to God cancels them for ever : whereas sins in words go farther—the uttered word cannot be recalled but by an humble retraction, and even at that the heart of the hearer has received the poison, it is wounded ; and the wound will fester. Then, again, public bad actions are amenable to public punishment, *whereas* backbiting, unless slanderous and defaming, is not liable to just public animadversion : hence so many indulge in it. Yet, again : what restitution is made for such backbiting ? Unfortunately directors of souls are *too easy* on this point.

IX.—ABOUT EQUIVOCATING.

Our Saint often said that the process of equivocating seems to aim at *canonizing falsehoods.* Simplicity is, after all, the best kind of shrewdness (*a*). The children of darkness may use artifices and cunning ways, but the rule for the children of God is that *He that walketh sincerely* (*b*) *walketh confidently* (Prov. x. 9). Duplicity, simulation, and insincerity always betray a low mind. If, in the language of the wise man, "the lips that lie kill the soul," what can be the result of the conversation of him who speaks with *a double heart* (1 s. xii. 3) ?

Apropos of this doctrine, invented in the shop of the father of lies, he quoted what Our Saviour said of the Scribes and Pharisees, who *compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, they make him a child of hell twofold more than themselves* (Matt. xxiii. 15) ;

(*a*) Tantamount to : Honesty is the best policy.

(*b*) i. e. with simplicity. Abp. Kenrick.

thus whoever pretends to save truth by equivocation chokes and kills it, for nothing will outrage truth and simplicity more than duplicity, and can there be, he would say, anything more insincere than an equivocation ? (See Philoth. p. 3, ch. 30.)

X.—NEVER TO CONTRADICT WITHOUT A REASON.

Among the worst enemies of society are those obstinate spirits who contradict every thing : they are the bane of conversation and great mischief-making : whereas meek yielding and complaisant souls are a charm to society and win all hearts. Our Saint greatly valued the practice of the holy King Louis, who would never offer a contradiction unless non-resistance were sinful. Nor was that Saint prompted by carnal prudence, which he abhorred from his inmost soul, nor even by the motives of the pagan emperor, who averred that no person should ever leave the royal presence in bad humor ; but his was a Christian wish, to avoid debates, quarrels, and discontentment, even as the Apostle advises. Blessed Francis thus explained this doctrine : " When it becomes necessary to contradict and oppose one's opinion, we should use the greatest meekness and dexterity, never offering violence to the mind of our opponent, because then nothing is gained."

It is dangerous to fret a horse, you must coax him, for if he is high mettled he will take the bit between his teeth, and run away at the rider's peril. So with the human spirit : if you force it you fatigue it, and by fatiguing you will break it : and once broken nothing can be obtained of it. The human mind needs to be persuaded and led, not forced, otherwise it will rebel.

XI.—ON TACITURNITY.

Some are taciturn from nature, some from pride, others

from stupidity, and yet some from sadness. Few are taciturn from virtuous motives, inspired by good sense and moderation. The holy Bishop, on being told of a certain person who wished to pass for a great man by dint of great taciturnity, he remarked that "should he gain his point he would have done so at a very little cost"; and after a while he added: "No, he will appear so much like a wise man, as a fool when he keeps silent." Wisdom does not lie in not talking, but in speaking only when necessary and to the purpose, and again in holding one's tongue at the proper time and place. Taciturnity becomes a virtue only when it keeps within certain limits of moderation.

XII.—ABOUT FEELINGS OF DISLIKE.

There are Christians, who, with the help of God's grace, succeed in banishing from their heart every feeling of hatred; yet, as after cutting down a tree, the hardest work still remains, namely, to grub the roots; so after expelling hatred from one's heart there will enter a feeling of aversion even more difficult to extirpate, for the very reason that it does not appear so hideous as the other. We all feel satisfied that we must pardon our enemy, however great the offence, if we wish to be pardoned by the Lord—*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.* But even as when a terrible storm is over, yet the waves continue in commotion, so after one has with the grace of God stilled in his heart the feeling of revenge, he may be yet heard to say, "I wish him *or* her no ill, I pardon all most willingly, and I wish them every blessing of nature, grace, and glory, that I wish for myself; but I cannot bring myself to meet them, for their presence stirs up unpleasant feelings in my heart, and I fear lest the old wound, now healed, be re-opened. Human weakness seems to give a color of reasonableness to this excuse: yet, it is inexcus-

able in the sight of God, who wishes us to rest all our confidence and self-reliance on him, humbling ourselves without being discouraged, and leaning entirely on his grace and not on our resources. We must trust him that as he has given us grace to pardon with our whole heart, so will he strengthen our soul to such a degree, that if we see our enemy we shall not be stirred up to feelings of resentfulness or revenge. But this confident hope must be based on the fact that our former pardon of our enemy has been sincere and true.

Yet, even after this reasoning has been agreed on, some will say: "I shall certainly see them, and be in their company: but speak to them I cannot. I fear lest I may say something unkind, and utter words which will make things worse than they formerly were." Now there is not the least earthly use to reason with this sort of people. They must be made to take their heart in their hands, and by a generous effort eradicate this secret aversion, and *tell God* to help their weakness, that they may achieve what He commands them to perform (*a*).

Which is all summed up in the oft-repeated words of Francis: "The pagans loved only those by whom they were loved; but Christians must offer their friendship to those who love them not, and to those very persons towards whom they feel the greatest repugnance and aversion."

(*a*) Da quod jubes et jube quod vis. St. Aug. *Give what thou commandest and command what thou willest.*

PART THIRTEENTH.

I.—ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

Blessed Francis called the exercise of the presence of God "our daily bread." We eat bread at all our meals, and we should keep the presence of God before us in all the actions of our daily life. "O!" he would say, "what makes the angels happy but that they *always behold the face of my father who is in Heaven* (Matt. xviii. 10.)? If the queen of Saba said to Solomon: *Happy are thy men and happy are thy servants, who stand before thee always, and hear thy wisdom* (III Kings, x. 8.), how much more reasonably should this language be addressed to those who can always be in the presence of Him, whom the angels wish for ever to see, although they see him continually. When the Sisters of the Visitation are assembled together at their work, at their recreations, or for any other exercise, there is a sister-officer, on whom it is incumbent to remind them of this lovely, and beautiful, and salutary Presence. She repeats at intervals: *Se souviennent de la Sainte Présence de Dieu toutes nos Sœurs, et de la très-sainte communion d'aujourd'hui.....*

Hear our Saint: "Pious people fall into many imperfections daily, only because they do not walk in the presence of God."

[Gen. xvii. 1.—*I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be thou perfect.*—Transl.]

II.—HOPE AND FEAR.

The surest way to work out one's salvation is to keep

within the bounds of hope and fear. Fear the judgment of God, and hope in his infinite mercy. Listen to our Saint: "Fear the judgment of God, but be not discouraged by it. Let us be buoyed up by the inspirations of his mercy, but become not therefore presumptuous." Again: "Those who have an extreme and unruly fear of being damned betray great want of humility and submission. It is certainly necessary to become little and to humble one's self and lose one's life for the sake of Christ, but that is in order to guard it, gain it, save it. Any sort of humility which clashes with charity is most undoubtedly a false humility."

III.—SELF-LOVE AND THE LOVE OF OURSELVES.

Self-love is always bad, and all sins, whether mortal or not, spring from self-love, that is to say, they are originated by an inordinate voluntary and fixed attachment to a creature or to one's self in spite of the will of the Creator. It was this love, says St. Augustine, which built the ill-fated city of Babylon, the walls whereof arose in very contempt and hatred of God. But the *love of ourselves* is of a different nature: for, as it is enjoined upon us, it must be righteous. We are directed to love ourselves in God and for God, looking after, and providing for ourselves the goods that are temporal and those that are spiritual and belong to the next world.

Then, this love of ourselves must be either natural or supernatural. Natural when it has reference to natural goods, in which sense St Paul says that *No man ever hated his own flesh* (Eph. v. 29), and such love, when properly directed, is not condemned by God, who is the Author of Nature as well as of Grace. Supernatural, when it aims at the goods of grace and glory. This latter love is as far superior to the other as grace is superior to nature.

The supernatural love of ourselves is one of hope and of charity. That of hope is interested, for it prompts us to love God as *our* supreme good, but not as *the* supreme good in itself, which is the love of charity. This latter is perfectly disinterested, leading us to love God and ourselves for his sake, referring everything to his glory.

The legitimate love of ourselves, both the natural and that of hope, is not always directly referred to God, but it can certainly always be; whereas, that of holy charity always and forever tends to him, either habitually, or virtually, or actually.

Says our Blessed Bishop: "The Saviour, who has ransomed us with the price of his own blood, has an infinite desire that we should love him, in order that we may be saved eternally: and he desires us to be saved, that we may love him eternally."

Our salvation must tend, for its ultimate end, both to the glory, which God will grant us in heaven and to that which we shall render to him. Hence greatly deceived are those who, treating of their eternal salvation, think only of their own interest, that is of the glory which God will bestow upon them, and not at all of that which they will procure to God. At the same time, this latter is the ultimate and sovereign glory for the sake whereof God has built Heaven, whilst the former is only the subordinate and secondary, and a means to reach the latter: for no one can glorify God in heaven, but he whom God glorifies for the purpose of being glorified himself.

IV.—THE MEASURE OF GOD'S LOVE.

Saint Bernard remarks that the object of God's love is infinite and can have no limits. Our Blessed Bishop called lazy and slothful those spirits which set limits to their love, and will not stretch beyond them, as if they intended to

confine God to the measure of their own hands. How can we qualify this wish to constrain our God within the limits of our own heart, whilst he is so unsurpassingly greater than it? If the love of Christ for us has been so unlimited, it is a shame that we should confine our own within limits so narrow. A remarkable saying of Blessed Francis bears on this subject: "It is impossible to remain a long time in a stationary state; no gain is no traffic: no ascent is a descent on the rounds of this ladder: he who conquers not is conquered. We live in the midst of perpetual battles; when we do not resist, we lose: nor can we resist unless we gain an advantage, and the advantage must result in victory; and that victory, a complete triumph and a crown."

V.—DO AND TEACH.

The Son of God, *the chief shepherd* (1. Pet. v. 4), the *Bishop of our souls* (ib. ii. 25), began by *doing*, and in that he continued thirty long years of his life, and then he undertook to teach, thereby instructing us that we must practice before we begin to teach. Accordingly, he reprimanded the doctors of his own times, "for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy and unsupportable burdens, and lay them on the shoulders of men: while they will not put forth a finger to move them." (Matt. xxiii. 3, 4). It is not because he wishes that we should value the doctrine they teach by the life they lead, but to show that teaching will carry more conviction and persuasion when it is upheld by the practice of the teacher; otherwise, how can they persuade others of that of which they are not convinced themselves? They might be compared to the bugle that sounds the charge, but does not move—to the ladder that helps you upstairs but itself never goes—to the sign-post that points the way but never stirs.

VI.—ABOUT MORTIFICATION AND PRAYER.

It was a saying of our blessed man that mortification without prayer is like a body without soul, and prayer without mortification like a soul without body. Mortification and prayer, like Martha and Mary, should join hands together in serving our Divine Lord harmoniously. He compared them to the scales whereof one sinks when the other rises. Do you wish to elevate the soul by prayer? Lower the body through mortification, otherwise the flesh will drag the spirit down, and hinder it from God's service. The rose of prayer must bloom on the thorny stem of mortification. The grove of incense, a symbol of the happy abode of prayer, cannot be reached but up the ascent of myrrh, which symbolises mortification. Incense itself, which represents prayer, gives its odor only when it is burnt. Thus prayer cannot ascend to heaven in the odor of sweetness unless it is uttered by a person of mortification.

According as we die to ourselves and to our passions, we begin to live to God, who will nourish us in our prayers with the bread of life and understanding, and the manna of his inspirations.

All this was beautifully expressed by our Saint in the following words:—"We should live in this world as if our spirit was in heaven and our body in the grave!"

VII.—ABOUT UNTRUTHFUL WORDS.

"We can hardly tell an untruth, be it ever so small, without injury to our neighbor." This saying of our Saint means that any untruth, however trifling it may appear, will always do some harm either to him who utters it or to others; it must needs wound truth and the straightforwardness of the heart; likewise, whoever lies, were it only in fun, proves that he has an insincere heart, and

that he speaks with *a double heart* (Ps xi), and it is said by Holy Writ that *the Lord will destroy deceitful lips* (ib); and is not he who tells an untruth, deceitful?

VIII.—ON RASH JUDGMENTS.

He could not bear that any one should be put down as a wicked person for having committed a reprehensible act; "for," he would say, "virtuous habits are not destroyed by one act contrary to them, and certainly a man cannot be branded as intemperate because he has been once guilty of intemperance." Thus, whenever he heard any one condemned as bad because he had committed a bad act, he took pains, in his sweet way, to relieve him of the charge by making a distinction between *vice* and *sin*—the former betokening a habit, the latter only an act.

To the objection, that if so, we could never, by the law of contraries, judge whether a person was in a state of grace, because a virtuous act is no sign that one has charity in his heart, he would reply that "if faith is known by works, charity is much more so, it being a virtue by far more active. Acts are the sparks which show that there is fire somewhere: and although in witnessing a sin manifestly mortal, we may safely say that the trangressor has lost grace, how do we know but God has immediately after touched his heart, and he has become thoroughly converted by an act of sincere true contrition? Hence we should be afraid to judge others by their sins. But as for their virtue, we have the widest range, inasmuch as charity believes and hopes whatever is good in our neighbor, and never thinks evil of any one; it rejoices at truth and goodness, but never in iniquity."

IX.—THE NOBLEST TRAIT OF CHARITY.

Blessed Francis placed the noblest mark of charity in the presence of God, the mark of his will in all things. In

fact the strongest proof of our being in a state of grace, is that we have no will contrary to the will of God, and prefer nothing to God's will: for, in the contrary case, charity ceases to reign. We should not only prefer nothing to God's will, but love nothing on a par with God. Certainly, says St. Augustine, he who loves something with the same degree of love with which he loves God, loves him less than he should, because one should not love anything but in reference and subordination to the love of God.

Yet this does not forbid us loving many things with God, when he has commanded us to love ourselves and our neighbor as ourselves. But to love a thing equally as well, or more than God, is incompatible with the virtue of charity, which places, in the heart it possesses, all creatures in the presence of the Creator, as the stars are before the sun.

X.—WORKS ARE OF DIFFERENT KINDS.

Theologians divide works into several classes.

1st. *Living* works, which have in themselves the principle of life eternal, the life of grace, prompted by charity and performed in charity.

2nd. *Dead* works, which are committed in a state of mortal sin, and have neither foundation nor root in charity; although good of a moral and natural goodness, still, as St. Gregory says, they are branches which cannot bear any fruit before God, not being connected with the root of charity.

3rd. *Mortified* works, which are performed in a state of grace, but mortal sin, coming after them, deprives them of all verdure and vitality, like plants during winter, which should it last for ever, would wither and kill them altogether.

Yet these works may revive as the chilled plant revives at the coming of spring. Thus they become—

4th. *Revived* works, renewed and restored to life. This happens when we emerge from the state of sin into that of grace. Then it is that all our works, which had been withered by sin, revive and resume their former greenness and vigor.

PART FOURTEENTH.

I—ABOUT THE LOVE OF COMPLACENCY.

True complacency in God must be rested on and proceed from, a sincere motive of charity—a motive disinterested, referring everything to God and his glory; thus our complacency will be such as God wishes it to be. This truth was thus explained by the Bishop: "The soul that possesses this love of complacency, never ceases crying in her holy solitude: Enough for me that God is God, his goodness infinite, and his perfection immense; little it matters for me whether I die or live, when my beloved lives eternally, a life of complete triumph. Death itself brings no sadness to the heart that feels that its sovereign love liveth. Enough for the loving soul, that the object whom she loves more than she does herself is brimful of eternal happiness; for as much as she lives more in him, whom she loves, than in the body, which she animates, it is not she that lives, but her beloved one lives in her."

By this virtue of complacency the soul finds her happiness in this, that God is God, and her pleasure consists in pleasing God without any regard to what may please her, provided what happens or is to be done, or to be endured, pleases God.

II.—ABOUT THE LOVE OF BENEVOLENCE.

The glory which God possesses is two-fold, interior and exterior. The first is God himself, because we cannot separate his goodness from his essence, no more than we can his

other perfections. This being an infinite good, can neither be increased by the honor of our virtues, nor diminished by the insult of our sins. But the other kind of glory, albeit it belongs to him, is not in him but in his creatures, like the income of a king, which is the king's indeed, but is kept in the vaults of the State Treasury. Now the exterior glory arises from the acts of obedience, and all homage due him, rendered to him by the creatures, created as they are for his honor and glory, in which consists the ultimate end of their existence. This last extrinsic honor we can wish and add to God, with the help of his grace, and thereby increase his external glory, from which we can also detract by committing sin. As regards this external good, we exercise a love of benevolence towards God, by accomplishing, in the wish to increase his glory, all the good acts in our power.

But this love of benevolence goes even farther. For inasmuch as charity commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves, we endeavour to make them work for this same exterior glory of God, and do all in our power to make them perform all the good they can to glorify him ; even as the Prophet expresses himself in his xciv. Psalm—*Come, let us praise the Lord with joy ; let us joyfully sing to God our Saviour, &c.*

Thus, also, this same love incites us to spare no labor, in order to prevent any evil action on the part of our neighbors, and prevent those sins, by which his divine goodness is offended, and this is properly called zeal—a zeal which *made* the same Prophet *pine away ;* because his enemies had forgotten God's words (Ps. cxviii. 139.)

But some will ask—Cannot this love of benevolence be practiced towards God even in what regards his interior and intrinsic good? Our Saint would answer, that we can also wish the possession of this spiritual good of

God, by rejoicing in that he possesses it, and that he is what he is. These ardent feelings can even be expressed in extraordinary aspirations, just as when St. Augustine exclaimed, "Oh! my God, I am Augustine, and thou art God; but if—a thing, however, which does not exist nor can exist—I were God and thou Augustine, I would, by changing states, wish to be Augustine that thou might be God." And, lastly, we practice this great love of benevolence, by exulting in affectionate and inward joy, because no interior happiness and perfection can be added to God.

III.—HOW THE WISH OF A THING AND THE POSSESSION THEREOF ARE COMPATIBLE.

The Angels are said *to desire to look on* CHRIST (I. Pet. i. 12.). How can they wish for what they already possess? Blessed Francis answered thus: "The blessed in heaven, in their state of supreme complacency, feel so much pleasure that they do not cease to wish to feel more and more, and, enjoying the divine goodness, they wish to enjoy it even more and more; being satiated, they wish to eat more, and, eating more, they wish to become satiated." And again: "We can well understand the Apostle when he says, that *the Angels desire to look on Christ.* Certainly they see him continually; but the enjoyment of that sight is so pleasant and delicious, that the happiness they relish fills them without taking away from them that same relish. The joy is not lessened by the wish; on the contrary, it is quickened by it, in the same manner that their wish is not blunted, but sharpened by the enjoyment."

To explain all this still farther, let us remember, that here we dwell on one of the wonders of grace and glory, and it all is above nature. We are taught by our Saviour, that in partaking of his favors we shall not only wish for more, but shall actually hunger after them. Yet some will say

that it is all very true as far as it regards this life, and while in a state of grace; but how can this very grace be increased in that glory above, where grace has received its consummation? Does not this unsatiated wish seem incompatible with the fulness of the satisfactions of the blessed? Blessed Francis meets these objections thus: "The enjoyment of a pleasure which gives continued pleasure never abates; on the contrary, it renews itself, and blooms for ever; it is for ever lovable, for ever desirable. The perennial contentment of the blessed begets a wish for ever contented, while their wish, thus ever satisfied, engenders in them a contentment for ever wished for. No more desire can exist for a finite good when its possession is obtained, and a finite good takes away all pleasure when it imparts a wish, as it cannot be both possessed and wished for at the same time. Not so with that good which is infinite; for the infinite good allows the wish together with the possession, and the pleasure of its possession is quickened in the wish for it, its very presence having the power to satisfy the desire, and to keep it alive by the greatness of its own excellence, which feeds, in those who possess it, a desire always contented, and a contentment always wishing for more."

IV.—OF DISPUTES ABOUT RELIGION.

He never liked to hear disputes about religion, especially at table, or after meals, saying that "they were no subjects for the bottle." I joked once about this saying of his, by remarking that the pitchers were broken, as it happened under Gedeon (Judges vii.), that *the lamps within the pitchers* might show their light. "Yes," said he, "they will show the fire and smoke of altercation; only smoke and blackness, and very little light."

But, above all, he deprecated controversy in sermons, which should aim only at building, not at demolishing;

should give rules of morality, and not fight those who have placed themselves out of the pale of the Church.

Nor must we side with those who pretend that controversial sermons will help to fortify Catholics in their belief, for experience does not warrant the assertion. The human spirit, out of its own evil tendency, is so prone into evil, that it will more quickly take to the objection than to its reply.

Our Saint's method was this:—Both in formal sermons and in conferences with protestants he would explain the simple and naked truth of the faith, in that clear simplicity which was so natural to him. He averred that truth, in its clear simplicity, had charms and graces to win the love of the most rebellious. And this system stood him in so good stead, that whenever he had a chance for a tranquil and easy interview with protestants, he always disarmed them, and made them surrender all their opposition. Should he not gain them over, the shafts of his eloquence had, however, pierced their hearts, and they would soon come to him for relief and cure—that his hand should heal the wound it had inflicted.

V.—THE SECRET OF DEALING WITH CONTROVERSY IN SERMONS.

Controversy should be used in sermons like the surgeon who conceals the lancet, and who apparently rubbing the abscess with liniment, presses his instrument and the pain is relieved. Secondly, all fatiguing discussions, and quotations of arguments *pro* and *con* must be avoided. Thus, thirdly, the audience will hear the truth with pleasure; because the mode of warfare is changed from the defensive into the offensive, and without openly attacking the enemy the orator puts him on his defence. To attain these gratifying results, Blessed Francis averred

that the objections which protestants draw from the Scriptures are each met by a reply, which in fact, is a catholic truth; hence all that is to be done is to announce the latter clearly and plainly, corroborating it with those very proofs which are by non-catholics used for their own purposes. Yet one should avoid to make it appear that he is, in fact, combating an assertion of his adversary. Thus the very weapon of attack is changed into an arm of defence.

This was a favorite system with our Saint. He once preached a whole course, during Advent, in Grenoble. The protestants of the place attended his sermons far more assiduously than those of their own ministers, for they found those of the Bishop of Geneva void of all contentiousness. Yet he invariably devoted the first part of his sermons to a solid exposition of the truth of the Catholic doctrine, according to the rules above expounded: in the second part he dwelt on points of practice, as regards morals and godliness. And so it happened that protestants were surprised to find that he proved the Catholic belief by those very passages of the Holy Writ, from which they drew their objections against it: and yet they never discovered the pious *ruse*.

VI.—A MODEST AND WITTY REPARTEE.

During his long apostolate in the bailiwick of Chablais, he once preached on that text which commands us to offer the right cheek to him who smote the left. Whereupon, as he was descending from the pulpit, he was accosted by a protestant, who asked him whether he felt that he could practice what he had just preached, or whether he was not one of those who preach but do not practice. The Saint replied:—

"My dear brother, I am a weak man and full of infirmities: yet, miserable as I feel to be, God teaches me what I should do; but I cannot tell what I would do, inasmuch as

the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. At the same time we know, that while without grace we can do nothing, with its aid we can do everything: a reed in the hand of that grace becomes an immovable pillar. If we must be willing to give our lives for the defence of our faith, how much more to endure a little affront for the maintainance of charity. Moreover, were I to be so recreant to the grace of God, as not to bear patiently an insult of this kind, that same Gospel which reprimands those who preach but do not practice, teaches us to do even as those teachers tell us, but not follow their example."

"Yet the Saviour," resumed the other, "never presented the other cheek to the servant of the Pontiff who struck him; on the contrary he resented the act."

"Thus you place our Lord on a level with those who preach but do not practice. It is blaspheming! We entertain more respectful sentiments towards that model of all perfection. For, while it is not for us to comment on the actions of him, who, we firmly believe, never acted but most perfectly, we dare not ask: Why have you done so? Yet we find that the Saviour felt zeal for the salvation of the soul of that impious man, and remonstrated with him in order to bring him to feelings of repentance. Moreover, he not only offered his cheek to those who wished to strike it, but gave up his whole body to be ploughed with the lash, and covered with wounds from head to foot."

VII. — HOW HE WAS BOTH GRAVE AND AFFABLE. (*a*)

It was with the aid of grace that he was enabled to pos-

(*a*) *Come-at-able*, our idiomatic word, may perhaps express better the meaning of Bishop Camus' heading of this article, *Sa gravité et sa douceur*. If I understand the "spirit" of St. Francis of Sales, and I have taken pains to understand it from whatever he has written, and whatever I have been able to procure written about him, *he* was a man whom you would feel in approaching, to be an ideal of perfection, and consequently perfectly human, and before whom the most wretched humanity felt perfectly at home. *Transl.*.

sess these two admirable qualities, working harmoniously together. Majesty and grandeur beamed on his brow, and yet a veil on his face, like on Moses', rendered him approachable to all. He possessed charms, which endeared him to all: but at the same time his demeanor was so grave and modest, that one could not help having both respect for, and fear of him, yet it was fear and respect mingled with love. People were not in fact afraid to displease him—for he never betrayed displeasure, and the most repulsive persons were received by him with an encouraging welcome; but people felt anxious lest they did not please him enough.

I acknowledge that I was so happy when I did anything that pleased him and gained his approbation, that I felt among the stars; and had he not taught me to refer every thing to God, many of my actions would have stopped half way. Persons of very high position in society, accustomed to intercourse with royalty itself, have acknowledged to me that they were placed on their guard more effectually in the presence of our Saint than before the lords of the earth; they saw on his countenance a reflection of God's intelligence, penetrating the mysteries of one's heart.

And yet as for his affability, its influence was felt from the moment one was before him. It was felt as a thing intensely humane and innate, not as a gift acquired—as if he was affability itself. Hence that power of his, which carried everything before him; condescending as he was, rendering himself all to all, every one readily yielded to him and took side with him in all his plans and opinions, aiming as they were to increase the glory of God and promote the salvation of souls.

VIII.—LOVE GIVES VALUE TO OUR ACTIONS.

It was an oft-repeated saying of his that the love of God

is the standard weight by which to measure the worth and merit of our acts. Some people value the goodness of an action by its apparent worth or its difficulty, and only cherish such deeds as will excite admiration, forgetting that true Christian virtues are not to be valued by the worth of nature, but by that of grace.

Fault was found with the Congregation of the Sisters (Visitation B. V. M.), because of their mild and easy rules. To all remarks he invariably replied that "who loves the most shall be most loved, and he who is loved the most shall be glorified the most." Which is according to the doctrine of St. Paul, as he laid it down under the dictation of the Holy Ghost, when he said that he held to no account either faith or alms, or even a martyrdom by fire *without charity*.

IX.—STRIKING EXAMPLE OF PATIENCE.

A gentleman of some influence once applied to Blessed Francis to obtain an ecclesiastic preferment in behalf of a certain clergyman. The Bishop replied that in the matter of conferring benefices he had, of his own free will, tied his hands, having left such matters to the deliberation of a board of examiners, who were to make the appointment after examination of the merits and talents of the candidate. He only presided over the meeting, and were the gentleman's friend to present himself as candidate he would bear the recommendation in mind. The other felt piqued, and replied to the prelate in very intemperate words, so far as to call him a hypocrite and an insincere man. But the Bishop stood as firm as a rock in the midst of the surging waves. When he attempted to break in a few softening and mild words, the other would tell him to reserve such talk for women.

The prelate at last promised him that he would himself

examine the clergyman privately: but to no purpose; the man could not appreciate the courtesy. At last the Saint said: "Do you wish me, then, to give the charge of my sheep to the first comer, and blindfolded? See for yourself if there is justice in your request." But the other broke out into words so improper that I cannot bring myself to stain those pages with their insertion.

A priest of eminent virtue, was in the room all this time, and after the visitor had left, asked the Bishop how he could bear it so patiently. "Well," replied he, "it was not he that spoke, but his passion. After all he is one of my best friends, and you will see that my silence will only make our friendship stronger..... But then, oh! has not God seen from all eternity, that he would bestow on me this day such graces as would enable me to bear this insult joyfully? Should I not drain the chalice held to my lips by the hands of a father so good? O how sweet is this inebriating cup, offered by a hand I have learned to adore from my infancy!"

"But had you no feelings at all?" asked the other.

"I tried to turn the current of my feelings by fixing my thoughts on the good qualities of the man, whose friendship I have so often enjoyed with so much pleasure; and I hope that when this whim has passed away, and the clouds of passion have been lifted up, he will come back with peace in his heart and serenity in his countenance."

Nor was the Saint disappointed. His friend did come back, and with many tears begged the Bishop's forgiveness, granted of course with a superabundance of love which only increased the fervor and sincerity of an old friendship.

X.—HIS FAVORITE BEATITUDE.

Blessed Francis was once requested to tell which of the eight Beatitudes was, in his opinion, the most perfect. It

was thought that he would give preference to the second, "Blessed are the meek." But, no: he quoted the eighth "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice sake." And he gave it as a reason, that "the life of those who are persecuted for justice sake is hidden in God with Jesus Christ, and becomes conformable to his image; for was he not persecuted all his life for justice sake, albeit he followed it in all its perfection? Such persons are veiled by the secret of God's countenance. They appear sinful whilst they are just: dead, but they live: poor, yet they are rich: fools and are wise: in a word, despised before men, they are dear to God with whom they live forever.

"Should God have given me a particle of justice, by which I were enabled to do some good, I would wish that at the last judgment, when all secrets shall be revealed, God alone should know my righteousness, and my acts of ungodliness were known to all creatures!"

XI.—A SENTIMENT OF GREAT HUMILITY.

Saint Bernard performed miracles as if all nature was at his beck. But when the world praised him for this great privilege he would shed bitter tears: and when asked the cause of those tears, he replied: "See, I read in Holy Writ that many who have performed miracles, shall yet be condemned, while the humble in spirit will be saved. Because this gift exposes those who possess it to the acclamation of the people, and consequently to the temptations of vain glory, which is the greatest enemy of humility, I weep for fear of the danger in which I am."

Our Bishop, together with a great devotion for that Saint, shared with him in this peculiar sentiment of humility, which he painfully betrayed whenever the sick were carried to him, that he might pray over, and touch them. As extraordinary cures often took place, and he knew how

highly he was accordingly esteemed by the people, he would sigh with great bitterness, and protest that this public esteem would cost him dearly, when after his death the people will refuse to pray for him, and he would thereby be long detained in purgatory.

XII.—HE NEVER REFUSED.

He practiced to the letter that sacred advice : *Give to him who asketh of thee* (*a*) ; yet it is true, he possessed so little of earthly goods, that it was a matter of wonder to me, how he could give away so much, and often I believed God multiplied goods in his hands.

But for what regards heavenly goods, he was prodigal in his bestowal of them. He never refused spiritual consolation or advice either in public or in private : and it was certainly wonderful how he was always ready with the most abundant and spontaneous supply of this mystical bread of life and wisdom. It was also remarked how elastic he appeared when requested to preach, and yet his carriage was heavy, his quickness not very great, and his enunciation slow. Once in Paris he was requested to preach on a certain day, and he readily assented. His domestic reminded him that he was engaged to preach elsewhere that same day. "Never mind," replied he, "God will give us grace to multiply our bread : *He is rich towards all who invoke him.*" (*b*). But the other remarked that there should be care taken of his health, "And do you believe," said he, "that if God grants us grace to find matter to speak about, he will not take care of the body which is the organ that gives out his doctrine ? Let us put our trust in him, he will strengthen us."

"Does God forbid to take care of one's health ?"—"By no means," answered the Bishop, "but he forbids a want

(*a*) Matth. v. 43. (*b*) Rom. x. 12.

of confidence in his goodness..... and I assure you," he added with some determination, "that were I requested to preach a third sermon on that same day, it would cost me less, both in mind and body, to consent, than to refuse. Should we not melt, body and soul, for the benefit of these dear neighbors whom our Lord has loved so much that he died for them."

XIII.—HE CONVERTS A BAD PRIEST AND THEN MAKES HIS CONFESSION TO HIM.

During one of his visitations he heard many and loud complaints of the scandalous life of an ecclesiastic, otherwise a man of great talents and much learning. He was so hardened and defiant that he not only protested his innocence, but even inveighed against his accusers. The holy prelate listened to all with his wonted benignity, but the effrontery of the man made him actually blush before him. The sight of the Bishop's mortification, while he uttered not a word, touched the heart of the wretch. Without one moment's delay he yields to God's grace, and begs of the Saint to hear his confession. Blessed Francis readily complies with the request, and the returned sinner stands before him like Naham emerging from the waters of the Jordan, purified and made whole.

"Ah! Bishop, what do you think of me, the greatest sinner upon earth?" said the penitent as he arose. "That God has overshadowed you with his greatest favors," replied the Bishop, "you appear to me all refulgent with grace." "But you know what I am."—"You are just what I say."—"But I allude to the past."—"That is just what I have no recollection of: and why should I remember what God has forgetten? Do you take me for that Pharisee who looked upon the Magdalen as she had been, not as she was when she bathed the Lord's feet in her tears? But to con-

vince you that I look upon you as replenished with celestial graces, whereof you have received a measure full and overflowing, I beg of you to share them with me by giving me your blessing;" and he accompanied the words by throwing himself on his knees, at which act the other became extremely embarrassed. "No, no," added the Bishop, "I am in earnest: I expect of you to return to me the same good office I have rendered to you just now." In vain did the priest struggle, he had to obey. The Bishop made his confession to him, and to prove that he had acted in true and entire confidence, he confessed to him several other times, and in public. The priest thenceforward led a holy life.

XIV.—CONTENTED POVERTY.

That saying of Seneca, "O poverty, thou art a blessing, yet little known!" was occasionally repeated by our Saint, and "in fact," he would add, "how can we help loving what our Saviour has valued so highly, and has been his faithful companion through life? Yet I cannot say I know what poverty is; I have not seen it very near, I only speak of it as I would of some foreign country by a geographical map, or as a paymaster knows the strength of an army. Seneca spoke well when he exclaimed, 'Happy the poverty which is cheerful!' Of course it cannot be poverty, if it is not cheerful. Such, indeed, was that of the Apostles, who rejoiced at their wants which they had to endure for the sake of their master. "A priest," he often said, "who has food and raiment, and is not satisfied, does not deserve the name of priest, nor does he deserve that God should be his inheritance. My Bishopric is worth to me as much as the Archbishopric of Toledo, for it will bring me either heaven or hell as the Archbishopric of Toledo to its incumbent, according as we have behaved in the fulfilment of our respective

duties. When one has enough to live on, piety is the richest income. Why ? my revenue meets all my wants. Had I more, it would be too much. Those prelates who have more than I have, are only tempted to entertain larger suites and a number of waiters and attendants who eat up the goods of the Cross. The less you possess, less you have to account for, and less to give away, and less anxiety about the manner of giving away, for we should always bear in mind that the King of Glory expects to be served and honored judiciously. Prelates who have a great deal are generally so generous, that at the close of the year they are no richer than I am, if even they have not run into debt. My ideal of wealth is to owe nothing.

"Let us wish only that which is necessary to nature, we shall never be poor; if we are covetous, to please public opinion, we shall never be rich. To enrich oneself quickly and by small gains, it is not necessary to hoard much wealth, but to diminish our wants, after the fashion of sculptors who achieve their work by cutting off." Our Saint could not bear to hear a priest complaining of poverty, for sufficient provision having been made for his living, "Of what does he complain ?..... Let him remember what he has loudly said in the presence of the church militant and triumphant, on the day of his first ordination, that God would be the portion of his inheritance. But who has God for his portion what can he need ? What can supply the wants of him to whom God is not enough ?"

XV.—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A VENIAL SIN AND AN IMPERFECTION.

Our Saint maintained that a venial sin is always committed with a consent of the will, whereas an imperfection is the consequence of an impulse forestalling a full operation of the will. To act with levity and indecorously, with

total and deliberate disregard to the scandal we may give to those around us is a venial sin, whereas to be taken by surprise and burst out in an immoderate laugh will be only an imperfection. To give way to spite deliberately and betraying resentment is a venial sin, whereas to become suddenly excited, to speak peevishly from an involuntary movement, which will disappear like the lightning, as soon as it flashed, is only an imperfection. Imperfections are not sufficient matter for absolution, whilst venial sins are yet not necessarily.

XVI.—HOW TO VALUE ONE'S VOCATION IN LIFE.

Let every man abide in the calling in which he was called (*a*), says St. Paul. To be contented with one's station constitutes one of the sweetest pleasures in life. Who wishes for changes is never at rest. Yet we should not be idolators of our condition in life ; for it would be vanity, and might lead us to disparage another's station. In that case one is to be compared to the Pharisee who came out of the Temple with the boastful words : *I am not as the rest of men* (*b*).

Blessed Francis thus admirably illustrates all this. "The Daughters of the Visitation shall always speak modestly of their humble congregation, and shall hold all others above it in their esteem and veneration, and yet shall they prefer their congregation to all others, as regards their love for it, giving a willing testimony, at proper times, of how happy they live in their vocation. It is thus also that wives should prefer their husbands to all other men, not in honor, but in affection. And it is thus that every one prefers his own country to all others in love, if not in value; and the sailor cherishes his craft as dearest to him, however others may

(*a*) 2 Corinth. vii. 20. (*b*) Luke xviii. 11.

be faster or more valuable. Let us then acknowledge that other congregations are even better, and superior to our own, but not more lovely, inasmuch as it has been the will of our Lord, that here we should find our home, and that our heart should be wedded to this Institute.

I remember with what sentiments of admiration he spoke of the sainted Bishop of Saluzzo, who, being a priest of St. Philip's oratory in Rome, scarcely ever spoke of his congregation, or only in very modest terms, and yet loved it so dearly that he could not be prevailed to quit it but by an express order of the Pope, and then with many and uncontrolable tears. At the same time blessed Francis always spoke of religious orders in terms of the highest esteem. Such has ever been the practice of Saints, in whose eyes everything is great but their own self or what pertains to them.

PART FIFTEENTH.

I.—ABOUT AFFECTIONATE MANNERS.

THE Bishop was extremely affable in his disposition, benign and benevolent, and hence his manners were obliging and affectionate; yet he knew how to control his affections, restraining them within the bounds of great modesty and reserve, so that, whilst his great sweetness inspired the greatest confidence, his gravity checked one if not into fear, certainly into a reverence which was felt without impairing the feeling of utmost trust.

We can better understand all this, from what he has said on the subject: "One should not employ affectionate manners too frequently, nor honeyed expressions thrown away upon every one at first abord. For, just as too much sugar will spoil the food and create nausea, so the lavish of affection will beget disgust, and its influence would not be felt from its being only a matter of habit. Again, as food into which too much salt is thrown is rendered unpalatable in consequence of its acrimony, whilst such a dish in which salt and sugar are mixed in good proportions please the sense of taste, so an address tempered by affection, discreet and properly measured, will always be agreeable, and will turn to great profit of those with whom we converse."

II.—PEOPLE ARE UNJUST IN REGARD TO THEIR SALVATION.

The sons of men are liars in their balances, says the

prophet (*a*). The ungodly, in order to keep the fear of God out of their sight, pretend that God is too good to take notice of man's faults, considering his weakness, and his proneness into sin; and others still more impious will say that God sees not man's evil deeds.

On the other hand, the scrupulous imagine that God takes pleasure in chastising, and is armed only with lightning; they are frightened at every thing, and never think that God's mercy controls his justice.

On these inequalities of the human spirit did our Bishop often descant. He would say that those who are so hardened in their evil ways as to be in that deplorable state in which they have no care for a life to come, either go *too far* or *not far enough*. *Too far*, if they believe in the existence of hell; for even then they should, from a just love for themselves, take care lest they increase their own sufferings, and should not burden themselves with such an amount of debt due the divine justice; the more so because even the most abandoned of men will be restrained from doing all the evil to which their passions prompt them, from fear of the penalties threatened by human justice. *Not far enough*, when they have obliterated all belief in the punishments of a future life, and the light of faith is entirely extinct in their heart.

But as regards those who yet feel some interest in their salvation, and who say, I wish to be saved—indeed they either do go too far or not far enough. *Too far*, inasmuch as they take no care whatever, thinking that it is not necessary after all to be so alarmed about one's salvation, when God is so rich in mercy, and will easily pardon the debt of even a thousand talents. And *not far enough*, doing very little good, and that little very imperfectly,

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(*a*) Ps. lxi. 10.

and so carelessly that their acts are like the shaft thrown by the imbecile hand of a child, and will never strike the target.

III.—OF A GOOD MASTER.

Here is a story told by our Bishop:—"A certain prelate of very noble birth was so easy in hiring servants, that he had twice as many as he needed, and yet he was not a whit better served, only his substance was more squandered. Rich as he was, his expenses overbalanced his income, and he became so involved that at last his steward found it difficult to furnish the table. His parents at last prevailed on him, much against the feelings of his heart, to dismiss one-half of his attendants. They drew up a list of such as were useless. He summons them to his presence, and asks them whether they stood not in need of him; whereupon most among them who had got wind of their intended dismissal, burst into tears, and one spoke for the rest:—'Monseigneur, it would be necessary to travel out of the world to find a better master than yourself. There is not one among us who is not willing to die in your service, and we assure you that in leaving you we lose all.' 'What, then, am I necessary to you?' replied the Bishop. 'Alas! so necessary, indeed, that if you abandon us, we all become miserable,' remarked the other. '*Sur mon âme*,' rejoined the master, 'it shall not be as they have advised me. Well, then, my children, stay all with me, some of you because you are necessary to me and I cannot do without you, and the rest because I am necessary to you, and you cannot get along without me. As long as I have bread, you shall have it also; and when there will be no more of it, we will starve together.' All this he said, mixing his tears with those of the poor servants. However, he got rid of them by degrees, placing

them out at service with his friends, and many through his influence and kind offices prospered. *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*"

IV.—ABOUT ELOQUENT PREACHING.

He reckoned the amount of praises to be allowed to preachers of great renown by the number of conversions they made; "for the conversion of a soul," he added, "is more wonderful than the resurrection of the dead, it being a transition from the death of sin to the life of grace." But when it was remarked that such and such an orator deserved great praise for his eloquence, learning, memory, grace of delivery, and other qualities proper of an orator, he would reply: "Those are the qualities of the profane orator and the result of human industry, but not of such on whom the Holy Ghost has bestowed the science of heaven's language, the language of the saints and of salvation. On leaving the church after a sermon, be not carried away by exclamations that you may hear about fine language, and beautiful delivery, and wonderful memory, and deep learning, and the like; it is the babbling of brainless tongues. According to St. Jérôme, Christian preachers should not employ the arts of rhetoricians, but the simple words of the fishermen, *i. e.*, the Apostles. If St. Paul reprobates tickling the ear, how much more strongly does he denounce the preachers who tickle them. On the other hand, if at the conclusion of a sermon the people leave the church striking their breasts, and you hear them saying:—indeed, he is a man of God, preaching not himself but Jesus crucified, he makes us feel bad for what we have done; it will not be his fault if we are not saved; that sermon will be cast up to us on the day of the last judgment; indeed, we must do penance if we wish to be

saved; lovely is the burden of the cross; and you see conversions following the man's preaching, and reformation of manners and breaking up of bad practices; then, indeed, you can form a just value of the goodness and efficacy of a preacher, not to his glory, but to that of God, who has sent him, and who has filled him with his spirit and speaks through his lips."

Once the Bishop related the following:—"A famous preacher came to see me in Annecy, and I requested him to preach. He sailed away in great style, parading before the audience sublime ideas, with terms so pompous and such flights of eloquence, that our good mountaineers gaped in admiration. As he had done, the air was thick with the praises of the orator. They vied with each other as to who could say the most in his praise." The good bishop called some of his diocesans apart, and questioned them on what they might have learned from the sermon. They all seemed at a loss what to reply, but one, more candid than the rest, said: "Had I understood him, he must have preached on common-place subjects; our admiration arises from our ignorance, for he has flown so high that we could not follow him, and we think more of the grandeur of the mysteries of our religion." The prelate praised his sincerity, and thought that he at least had derived some fruit. Yet a preacher who has only blossoms and a fine foliage of eloquence runs the risk of being reckoned as the barren tree. It is not enough that the spring should be all blossoms, if the autumn bears no fruit. Did not our Saviour say:—*I have chosen you, and have appointed you, that you should go and should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain* (*a*)?

(*a*) John xv. 16.

V.—ABOUT COMPLICITY IN SIN.

There are weak souls that take umbrage at every thing. Should they be in company they feel as their own whatever wrong may be committed by others against even the rules of good behaviour. But if temptations cannot hurt unless we give consent, how can the faults of others affect us if we do not partake in them with consentment or encouragement? Yet, they say, is not fraternal correction commanded? Yes, commanded, but only in certain circumstances, as for instance, to superiors, and even then it must be imparted *in all patience and obedience.* Even inferiors may sometime, be under obligation of administering a correction, but it must be done with great modesty and humility, and when there is hope of amendment, otherwise fraternal correction is not obligatory.

It would then be an indiscretion to correct whatever may fall under our observation as deserving reprehension.

Hear our Bishop: "In your conversation be at peace with whatever is done or said. For if it is all right, you can therefore praise God; if wrong you have an opportunity to serve him by turning your heart therefrom, but neither showing fastidiousness nor making a sour face, inasmuch as it is not in your power to stop the bad words of those who wish to utter them, and who will even do worse from a spirit of defiance. Acting thus you preserve your innocence amid the hissing of the serpent, and like a fine strawberry, you will not be tainted by the venomous breathing around you."

VI.—BURNING ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS.

During a visitation he made among the perpetual snows of the mountains of Faucigny, Blessed Francis was informed that a shepherd had been frozen to death in a ravine, into

which he had fallen, whilst endeavoring to rescue a stray cow. In relating the occurrence he thus commented on its circumstances: "Good Lord! and the ardor of the peasant in searching for the lost cow was so intense that the ice could not cool it; why then am I so indolent in looking after my sheep? Indeed I felt deeply moved when I heard of that occurrence, and my heart, frozen as it is, was then melted. It was a wonderful sight, the valleys crowded with houses and the mountains covered with ice all over, the poor widows and the little villagers and country girls, in their humility so fertile in virtue; whilst Bishops placed so high in the church of God are frozen and sterile! Ah! cannot a sun be felt so warm as to thaw this cold heart of mine?"

VII.—ABOUT THOSE WHO ARE DISCONTENTED WITH THEIR OWN CONDITION IN LIFE.

Of nothing we hear so many complaints as of one's state in life. It is one of the usual temptations of the enemy to make us feel discontented, and to render us unhappy. Whilst we are so often admonished by the Holy Ghost to be satisfied with the condition in which we are placed, the evil spirit continually incites us to wish for a change. It is a great secret and great perfection to remain firm in the boat of life in which God has quartered us. Our Bishop would say on this matter: "Think of nothing else; sow not wishes in other people's gardens; wish not for that which you are not, but earnestly desire to be the very best of what you are. Endeavour your best to perfect yourself where you are, and bear manfully all the crosses, light or heavy, that you may encounter. Believe me, this is the leading principle, and yet the least understood in spiritual life. Every one follows his own taste;

very few place their happiness in fulfilling their duty according to the pleasure of our Lord. What use to build castles in Spain, when we are ordered to build in France? This is my old doctrine and you understand me well."

VIII.—THE JUST MAN FALLS SEVEN TIMES A DAY.

A pious soul meditating on this text fell in great agony, taking it literally, and thinking, 'how often shall I fall, I who am not just,' and yet however carefully she examined her conscience at night, and closely watched herself during the day, she could not often find that number of faults. Hence her great embarrassment. At last she consulted our Bishop, and he cleared her doubts thus: "It is not said that the just man sees or feels himself falling, but that *he shall fall seven times* a day. Do not worry yourself, but humbly and frankly acknowledge what you have observed in yourself; and what may have escaped your notice, leave it all to the sweet mercy of God, who, with his own hand, relieves those who fall without malice, and relieves them so promptly and so tenderly that they do neither perceive their fall, because the hand of God has relieved them, nor that they have been relieved, because their rescue has been so prompt that they have not even given a thought to it.

"There is no doubt, that whilst we live in this body, so heavy and corruptible, there is something felt wanting in us. I have perhaps told you already that we must have patience with all the world, but, more than all, with ourselves; inasmuch as we become very troublesome to ourselves the moment we begin to distinguish between the old and the new Adam, the interior and the exterior man.'

IX.—ABOUT COMPANY AND CONVERSATION.

There are people, who no sooner resolve to lead a life of devotion and piety, than they think they must give up all intercourse with others, and thereby they render spiritual life hateful. Our Blessed Bishop, on the contrary, maintained that devout people should be the light of the world, and the salt of the earth.

But, if you throw back into the sea the salt that came out of it, it will melt and be lost!

True, but if your food is not seasoned with salt, it will be insipid.

"Perfection does not consist in keeping aloof from the world, but in not becoming attached to it, nor making one's happiness depend on the enjoyment of it. The sight of the world is dangerous only so far that he who sees it might love it, but that sight cannot hurt him who is firm and resolute. In a word, the perfection of charity is the perfection of life, because charity is the life of our soul. Our ancient Christians lent themselves to the world only in their bodies, but not in heart, and they were perfect."

X.—LOVE THE WORD OF GOD.

As a good appetite is a sign of a healthy state of the body, so an eager wish to hear the word of God, bespeaks the healthiness of the soul. Saints always relish holy things and the words which treat of them. This love of the word of God is a great mark of predestination, and perhaps to this hunger and to this thirst does the fourth beatitude allude. For whoso endeavors to advance in perfection loves to hear those who will teach him how to act, and this is the duty of those who administer the word of God. Yet it often happens that persons very fond of hearing that blessed word, form predilections among sacred orators, as if the

bread of salvation were not equally as useful when carried by a raven or imparted by an angel—I mean an agreeable and pleasing speaker or an imperfect one.

But "how does it happen that some are more agreeable than others?" It is often the result of a false judgment on the part of the people. The duties of an orator are threefold—to teach, to move, and to please: but many diseased minds seek only for the last, which, in fact, should be the least sought after, even as we read in holy Writ, that God will crush the mouth of those who please men. In this sense did the Apostle say that were he to please men, he would not be a servant of the Lord.

Hear now what the holy Prelate said: "I have observed that when I write to a friend on wretched paper, and therefore the writing is also bad, I am thanked with as much cordiality as when I write on the best of paper and most perfect penmanship. And why? because no attention is paid to the paper or to the writing, but only to the writer. The same must be practiced in regard to the word of God. Never look at him who announces and explains it to us. Be it enough for us to know that it is a preacher appointed by the Lord. Satisfied as we must needs be that God honors him so much as to speak through his mouth, how can we fail in the honor due to God's representative?"

XI.—ABANDON YOURSELF INTO THE HANDS OF GOD.

We cannot escape from God, nor can we evade for a moment his watchful eye: let us, then, with a good will and with love do that which is already a necessity to us. Let us cheerfully surrender ourselves into his hands for time in this life, and for eternity in the next. This abandonment of ourselves into the hands of God was considered by our Saint as the sum of Christian perfection. The Gospel

insists on nothing so much as on renouncing ourselves for the love of God: but mark it well, it must be done *for the love of God*, not through any other motive.

"It needs be well understood," says our saintly father. "that to give up our soul, and quit, as it were, ourselves, means nothing else than to quit and get rid of our own will, for the purpose of giving it to God: for it would be of no avail to abandon and quit ourselves unless it was to unite us intimately with God."

But how are we to obtain all this? Nothing easier:— a total submission of our own will to that of God. Thus disposed, we take whatever happens from the hand of God, no matter how repugnant the thing may be, either in its own nature, or in its circumstances, or in the way it affects us. This he called the "happy death of our will," not, however, that he meant that our free will forsakes us: for in this consists the perfect beauty of this abandonment, that it emanates from the exercise of our free will.

Lastly, he said that when a soul thus wholly given up to the will of God, discovers a particular will in itself, she suppresses it at once, and merges it into the will of God, just as the brightness of the stars is every morning merged into the light of the sun.

XII.—FRUGALITY AND KEEPING ALOOF FROM THE WORLD A SOURCE OF WEALTH.

Our Bishop once related that Mgr. Vespasian Grimaldi, a Piedmontese, met with great success in France, during the regency of Catherine de Medici. Raised to the Archbishopric of Vienne in the Dauphiny, and endowed with many rich benefices, he lived in grand style at Court. But whether God did not bless his ways, or because he was too addicted to prodigality and great ease, he was continually vexed either with the administration of his wealth, or with

the ailments of an infirm body. Tired at last of a life of languor and disappointment he resolved to retire into private life, and set his heart upon a delightful spot on the borders of Lake Leman. Accordingly he took up his abode in the little township of Evian, in ancient times called *Aquianum*, from its clear waters and cooling springs. He resigned his Archbishopric and all his benefices, reserving only two thousand dollars of pension, and repaired to Evian, accompanied by only three or four attendants. He was then sixty-five years old. He had chosen the spot because it was an out-of-the-way place, with no provincial roads leading to it, and hence very retired and not exposed to the intrusion of visitors. Evian is in the diocese of Geneva. Once entered upon his retirement he never left it. But quietness and regularity of life, healthy exercises, peace of mind, and a fervid piety brought such a change even in his constitution that he not only was rid of all his ailments, but in very short time gained a wonderful robustness. So true is the oracle, which proclaims that we should seek first the kingdom of God, and its justice, and all the rest will be added unto us. Accordingly, when he came to his death at the good old age of *one hundred and two years*, after a life led in utmost frugality, with only two thousand a year, judiciously administered, he enjoyed an income of more than six thousand, which sum he had employed in doing good to his neighbors, so that for two or three leagues around Evian not a distressed family was to be found, all being provided with the surplus of his revenues.

Our Blessed Bishop was consecrated by this very Prelate, assisted by the Bishops of Trois-Chateaux and Damas.

From the above history, we learn the following lessons: 1. A Court is not the element for prelates. 2. Nor that for their health and holiness. 3. Wealth is slavery and breeds unhappiness. 4. A peaceful, quiet, and hidden life

is the true happy one for the body. 5. And much more for the soul. 6. The truth of the old proverb that frugality and a judicious economy is the greatest revenue. 7. No funds are ample enough to cover those expenses which are incurred for the sake of feasting the eyes of the world and feeding the cravings of vanity. 8. He who lives after public opinion will never be rich, but who is satisfied with the simple necessaries, can never be poor. 9. Alms are the best investment even in this life. 10. But much more so in the next.

XIII.—ABOUT PROSPERITY.

He could not bear to hear the word "Fortune," that a man had made a *fortune*, or was a *child of fortune*. "What!" he would say, "does then this pagan idol still stand in the midst of our people, whilst all others have been destroyed by Christianity? God forefend that those who should be children of his Providence, became children of fortune. We are taught to place all our hopes not on the uncertainty of wealth but in God alone.

"How can those who profess to cling with Christ to his Cross, and to glory in its shame, be so eager in hoarding riches, and cling to them so tenaciously, considering that the Gospel places Christian beatitude in poverty, contempt, sorrow, tears and persecutions. Why, even the philosophers looked upon prosperity as the step-mother of virtue, whilst adversity is its nurse."

I asked him once, how does it happen that we are so ready to cry unto God for deliverance, when we are laboring under any distress or trial?

"It is," replied he, "the voice of our weakness and the mark of our infirmity: for as the salt water fish is the best and more nutritious, whilst that from fresh waters is flabby and not so savory, so a generous soul is inspired with cou-

rage in the midst of difficulties, and the coward finds its element only in prosperity. Thus it is that adversity affords the best opportunity for practicing the purest love of God. For tribulation has no other charm but the hand of God who sends it, and hence it easily leads to God himself and to his will and good pleasure; whereas prosperity, charming as it is to the senses, like another Delilah, soothes our reason, and leads us into the inordination of loving the prosperity which is, indeed, given by the Lord, but step after step draws us away from the love and attachment which we should have for him, who also sends us adversity. Moreover, should prosperity even prove the means to glorify God, there would yet lie a mixture of our own interest with that of God, which, of course, renders our love of God less pure, and, therefore, less perfect, even as St. Augustine beautifully says: 'O Lord, he who loves something else with you, and not for your sake, loves you less than he is bound to.' "

PART SIXTEENTH.

I.—ST. FRANCIS' EQUANIMITY AMID DANGERS.

The insensibility of Stoics is an absurdity, for it is impossible to divest oneself of the impressions of human passions, during life. True philosophy teaches to bring those impressions under subjection and to govern them. Many have read of that philosopher who, although a professor of Stoicism, was so affected by the perils of a furious storm at sea that he gave way to fear none the less than the rest of the passengers. Whereupon, the storm having been stilled, he was asked why he had acted so much in opposition to the tenets of his sect, to which he modestly replied that "he only became alarmed lest a good man (*himself!*) should perish, while the rest, being all wicked, had no business to fear!"

"On the contrary," said a bystander: "if you are a good man you should rejoice at the opening of a passage into the Elysean Fields, whilst the wicked should fear the torments awaiting their souls after death."

Undoubtedly, there are certain natural fears, which are in themselves indifferent, are inherent to one's nature, and may be found even in holy men, as for instance the fear of thunder. St. Thomas of Aquinas, a paragon of learning and piety, was afraid of the lightning almost to excess. On such occasions he found comfort in repeating the words, *the word was made flesh and dwelt among us.* Cæsar, than whom a more intrepid chief never led armies to victory amidst greater perils, was so painfully affected by the flash of the lightning, that he always kept laurel leaves by him

trusting to their virtue in warding off the burst of a thunder.

Few, indeed, are not afraid of thunder and lightning, the more so when they burst upon us all of a sudden. Yet there are souls, so united with God, as not to fear them in the least, like the eagle, who alone of all birds, takes pleasure to sweep the heavens when nature is convulsed to its very foundation. Those souls are like the dolphin, who, whilst at the brewing of a storm all other fish dive deep and seek quiet recesses, carols over the waves, and leaps for very joy at the approaching struggle between the elements.

In the Alpine mountains the echo multiplies ten and a hundred fold the rumble of the thunder and its clap. Amidst those terrific explosions our holy Bishop was as calm as a babe sleeping on its mother's bosom. Referring to one of these occasions he remarked : " Yester-eve we had great thunder and great lightning, and I was delighted to see our people making the sign of the Cross often, and often repeating the name of Jesus. ' Ah !' said I to them, ' unless ye had been frightened, our Lord would not have been invoked so often !' in truth it consoled me to see their faith, although the violence of the thunder was so great that it shook me all over, and I could not help laughing."

So true it is that *A secure mind is like a continual feast* (*a*) *!*

II.—WE CAN NEVER KNOW WHETHER WE ARE IN A STATE OF GRACE.

In my opinion among the worst of temptations is that of wishing to know whether one is in a state of grace, for the Holy Ghost says that *he that is a searcher of Majesty*

(*a*) Prov. xv., 15.

shall be overwhelmed by glory (*a*). And, in fact, has not the sentence been pronounced—*man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred* (*b*) ? However, this is to be taken as regards the certainty of faith. As for that certainty which springs from our confidence in God, let us have as much of it as we can, for it rests on an infinite goodness, and on a mercy without bounds.

To a soul involved in the meshes of a temptation of this nature thus did Blessed Francis bring relief : " You should never enquire whether your heart pleases God, but in its stead whether his heart pleases you : and, indeed, if you look at his heart it cannot fail to please you : for his heart is all sweetness, and suavity, and condescension, and tenderness towards poor souls, provided they acknowledge their misery, all compassion for those in spiritual want, all goodness towards the penitent, and who could not love that royal heart so manly, motherly towards us ?"

III.—ABOUT INTERIOR DESOLATIONS.

There are souls who will not acknowledge any devotion unless it is sensible. They cannot eat the bread of life unless it be very tender and sweet. Our Saint, on the contrary, had a predilection for interior tribulations. He often repeated that the best souls, and really virtuous, are those who enjoy the peace of God in the most bitter bitterness of crushing afflictions.

Once he addressed a person suffering from the privation of spiritual consolations thus : " The love of God consists, not in consolations or in blandishments, else, our Lord was not beloved of his father when he was sad even unto death, and cried : *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me* (*c*) ? And yet it was then that he performed the

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(*a*) Prov. xxv. 27. (*b*) Eccl. ix. 1. (*c*) Matt. xxvii. 46.

greatest act of love that can ever be conceived. But so it is, we are forever begging for a little consolation and a sweet sauce on our food; I mean, we wish to enjoy a tender sentiment and blandishments in our love of God.

"After all, dry sweets are not any the less delicious than the liquid ones, nor is a roasted meat less savory than the stewed, and in fact dried roses are even more fragrant than fresh ones, and lastly a healthy stomach is better nourished by strong food than by dainty and elaborately-prepared dishes."

IV.—WHAT PROFIT TO DERIVE FROM IMPERFECTIONS.

Flies and fleas are a great annoyance, but there is no cruelty in them. They exercise our moderation, but not our patience. There is no need to call in the resources of a virtue so noble in order to bear the sting of those little animals.

There are souls, with a conscience so delicate, that the smallest imperfection annoys them, and then they are annoyed at their having felt annoyed, and this latter feeling is even more annoying than the former one. It all proceeds from self-love, and the more difficult to be cured because hidden.

They have an exalted opinion of their own perfection, and become disconsolate when they commit an imperfection; like a fastidious beauty that will not bear the least wrinkle or the smallest fault. They are like those who are so particular about their health, that they believe themselves sick at the slightest ailing, and end by destroying their health with the immoderate care they take of it.

Our Blessed Bishop maintained that out of the earth we should dig the trenches, and build the ramparts. He meant that we should derive profit from our own imperfections, employing them to dig the foundation of a just and confid-

ing humility, giving us courage to hope against hope. Thereby we obtain salvation at the very hand of our enemies.

V.—THE SPIRIT OF THE EPISCOPATE.

Bishops being the successors of the Apostles, should not limit their solicitude to their own diocese so as to forget all other churches, in the aggregate whereof the Episcopal Spirit resides. Blessed Francis uniformly felt and expressed this solicitude for the welfare of the whole Church in general, and of her different portions in particular. Cardinal Bellarmino, whose name is above all praise, and with whom I have been on friendly terms, held in great esteem the correspondence he maintained with the Bishop of Geneva. Once he wrote to him that his letters made him wish to be Pope, only that he might make him Cardinal, for, he wrote, "it strikes me that there is great need of men like you, to whom, I am confident, God communicates light and views for the welfare of the Church universal, and such as should claim the attention of the Holy Father and of his Cardinals. You will oblige me by communicating such lights to me, according as God will grant them to you, that I may from time to time, and when an opportunity offers itself, present them to his Holiness."

Shortly before his death, he told me of an interior wish he had to make a journey to Rome, before he died, that he might make to the Pope some suggestions, the result of an experience of thirty-five years in the management of souls, and especially in the conversion of the stray children of the Church.

VI.—ON SENSIBLE DEVOTION.

He was not partial to this kind of devotion, nor did he show much sympathy for souls who were extremely anx-

ious to possess it, for this very anxiety made them lose it, inasmuch as they acted like mothers who spoil their children from over fondness and tenderness.

When we love independent of consolations from heaven, we 'Honor God out of our own substance'; but if we double our energy in honoring God when buoyed up by his consolations, we love him more for his boons than for himself, and more with his own substance than with our own.

"Sir," he would say, "the act of virtue we perform is the more perfect when there enters less of our own self. Generally speaking 'I' and 'mine' and 'our' spoil our work, and it is like the cobweb which trammels the bees in their labor, and by which the honey is often poisoned."

A devout person once complained to our Saint that he had no sensible feeling of devotion, God giving him only thorns but no roses: "So much the better" said he; "you do not belong to the silly crowd that shouted *Let us crown ourselves with roses* (*a*)—You belong to the chosen company of St. Catherine, who preferred a crown of thorns to one of jewels. Tell me, would you like better a substantial dish without gravy, or only gravy without meat? what is better, a partridge without an orange, or an orange without partridge? Good Lord! how long shall we act like children, and love milk and sweet meats, instead of more nourishing food, perhaps not so dainty, but certainly more nutritious?"

VII.—ABOUT THE LENGTH OF A SERMON.

He loved brevity, and would say that as a lamp will be extinguished by pouring too much oil on it, and a plant will rot by excessive water, so the memory of an audience

(*a*) Cant. II, 8.

is overwhelmed by too much matter crowded upon it. Say little, but well, and carefully meet your point, caring little for those who may find fault for your repeating the same thing over and again.

"What! is not the iron to be hammered again and again before it is reduced to a defined shape? has not the painter to lay the brush on the canvass many times before his work is completed? How much oftener, then, are eternal truths to be repeated in order that they may make an impression on hearts hardened by sin, or on minds dull of comprehension?"

He wished our orators to model themselves after the homilies of the fathers, who said few things, but always important, to the point, and carefully put together.

He had adopted the rule—*Hora integra inepto oratori praelonga, idoneo satis longa videtur: tres horæ quadrantes a bonis æstimatoribus horæ integræ præferuntur*

VIII.—A MEMORABLE INSTANCE OF FORGIVENESS.

He once narrated the following fact which had happened in Padua, where he had made part of his studies:

"Some of the students had the perverse habit of going over the city at night, challenging the people, and if no reply was made, they would fire upon them. So it happened that a student, being challenged, refused to answer and was killed. The murderer took refuge with a good widow woman, with whose son he was on terms of great intimacy. She harbored and secreted him very carefully. But within a few moments she received the harrowing news that her son had just been killed. The truth flashed at once upon her mind, and proceeding forthwith to the closet wherein she had secreted the murderer of her son, with a flood of tears she thus addressed him: 'Alas!

what had my son done to you that you should kill him so cruelly?' The culprit, whelmed by the atrocity of his deed, and the remembrance of the former friendships, burst into tears, and tore the hair from his head. Instead of begging pardon of the desolate mother, he throws himself on his knees, entreating her to give him up, that he may publicly atone for a deed so atrocious. The heroic woman, satisfied with the feelings of true repentance evinced by the murderer of her son, wished for no revenge, but that he may live and secure God's pardon. Accordingly she had him conveyed to a place of security.

Afterwards the soul of the murdered youth, appeared to his merciful mother, and informed her, that her forgiveness had been so pleasing to God, that his time of punishment in Purgatory had been shortened.

IX.—ON PURGATORY.

The thought of purgatory should be, in our Saint's opinion, a source of consolation. "Those" said he, "who fear purgatory so much, are prompted rather by self-love, and motives of self-interest, than by a due regard for God. This is greatly due to preachers who, descant more on the sufferings than on the happiness and peace of the souls detained in purgatory. True, those sufferings are greater than any they have endured in life, but the interior consolations enjoyed therein are above any contentment of which man may partake in this world. For, 1st, the souls enjoy an uninterrupted union with God. 2d. Their will is so transformed into the will of God, that they cannot but love what he wills, so much that should the portals of heaven be opened to them, they would rather throw themselves into the abyss of hell than appear before God with the least stain upon them. 3d. They endure their purification with a will full of love, because such is the good will

of the Lord. 4th. They are willing to stay there as long as it may please God. 5th. They are now impeccable, and hence cannot commit the least act of impatience, or the smallest imperfection. 6th. They love God more than they do themselves, and above all things, and their love is pure and disinterested. 7th. They are consoled by the angels. 8th. They are sure of their eternal salvation. 9th. Their bitter bitterness is in the midst of the most perfect peace. 10th. If their sufferings bear a semblance to those of hell, an influence from heaven is felt in their hearts, through a divine charity, which fills and inspires them. 11th. A happy state to be wished and not dreaded, for those are flames of love and charity! 12th. Yet they are dreaded, because they hold back from us the compensation of love, which consists in seeing and loving God for ever and evermore.

Blessed Francis often recommended to our perusal, the Treatise on Purgatory, by St. Catherine of Sienna. Accordingly I have read it time and again, and always with renewed pleasure and edification. I have given it to non-Catholics also to read, and it has produced in them many salutary impressions.

"Why, then," some will say, "pray so much for those souls?"

To shorten the time of their suffering, and to hasten the hour when they will be admitted to give so much glory to God.

X.—HE REFUSES A DISPENSATION.

After having given all the reasons why he could not comply with a request of dispensation, and yet being importuned about it, immovable as he was in such occasions, he at last gave a flat refusal, by declaring the granting of it

impossible. The petitioner still urged, remarking: "It is not the want of power, but a lack of good will toward me!"

To which he said: "An honest man limits himself to what is lawful, and calls impossible that which is not permitted." Still the other threatened his resentment were the grant refused, to which the blessed man replied: "Should I ask you an improper thing, I would feel indebted to you for refusing me: but what is just you would never refuse."

"Certainly, I would."

"I know better. You are too careful about the salvation of your soul thus to act. As for myself, I will acknowledge that, however miserable I am, I have my claims on heaven, and could never be prevailed on selling my right for a pot of lentils."

XI.—ABOUT MIRACLES.

Saint Bernard, who had received such a wonderful gift of performing miracles, felt yet more anxiety about bringing his flesh under subjection than to restore the dead to life. Our blessed Bishop was in the same state of mind, and he was wont to designate an act of virtue performed in a proper spirit of charity, a miracle of grace. "For," he would say, "as a miracle is an act of God above the ordinary laws and rules of nature, so a meritorious action, performed by supernatural grace in us and through us, is worth a hundred pounds of what divines call gratuitous graces, amongst which is that of operating miracles. The latter, indeed, can exist even in a soul wedded to sin, and many have possessed it who will not be found in heaven, whereas he who dies with the least degree of justifying grace cannot be lost, and has a claim on the inheritance of God."

XII.—THE BISHOP'S REPLY TO A REMARK ON HIS "INTRODUCTION TO A DEVOUT LIFE."

Some friends of his, prompted by motives of worldly prudence, witnessing the immense success of the "Introduction," so rapidly translated into all languages, advised him to write no more, as he could not hope to surpass himself. Apropos of it, he once remarked to me that the wisdom of the cross was far different from that of the world. "See;" said he, "these people love me, and their affection suggests the advice; but if they turned their eyes, ever so little, from me, a mean and poor man, and fix them in God, they would speak a different language. For, if God has been pleased to bless that little work, why should he withhold his blessing from another? If he has deigned to draw his glory from the first, as he drew light out of darkness, and fire from the muddy pool, why, is his hand shortened or his power diminished? And is it not yet in his power to make living waters spring from the jaw-bone of an ass? But these good people do not think of that; they only feel interested in my glory, as if we should seek it for ourselves, not for God, who works in us whatever good we do. Now, we are taught in the Gospel, that far from seeking the plaudits of the world, we must, on the declaration of St. James, hold that the praise of men is a poor sign of being a servant of God. *Whoever will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God* (James iv. 4.). Thus, had this work begotten in me any vain glory, I should purposedly write some of less value, to dissipate such fumes, and to secure to myself that blessed contempt on the part of men, which renders us the more agreeable to God, because we become crucified to the world."

XIII.—DIFFERENT CONDUCT OF TWO DISTINGUISHED DIRECTORS.

While Blessed Francis was in Paris, A.D. 1619, many

persons consulted him on the affairs of their salvation. It afforded him great opportunities to study the different ways of God towards souls, and the varied conduct of directors. He narrated how he was struck by the systems of two eminent men, distinguished preachers, and great directors of souls, both exemplary servants of God, and yet so different in their ways that they seemed the opposite to each other, although both earnestly and honestly aiming at the greatest honour and glory of God. One was extremely severe, both in his sermons and private intercourse, insisting upon the practice of the utmost mortification and of penitential exercises. By such means he led his penitents to an exact observance of the law of God, great care of their salvation, and yet without harassing them with scruples, but holding them under an admirable subjection. The result of his particular conduct was, that God was greatly feared, sin shunned as a serpent, and acts of virtue most accurately performed. The other led souls to God by a contrary path altogether. His exhortations were inspired by the purest love of God. Virtue to be loved even more than vice hated, and to be loved because it pleases God even more than because of its agreeableness; while sin should be shunned more for for its displeasing God than because it injures him who embraces it. It resulted therefrom that a soul conceived a pure and strong love for God, and a tender affection for one's neighbors, for the love of God.

XIV.—HOW TO BEHAVE WHEN ASSAILED BY CALUMNIES.

Francis was once asked whether it was not necessary to repel calumny with the weapon of truth. He replied by averring that in such circumstances we are called upon to practice many virtues.

1. Truth, to which a love for God and for ourselves in God, commands us to render homage; yet a homage sweet

and peaceful, without trouble or anxiety as to the result. Our Saviour repelled the charge of being possessed by the devil with the simple reply—*I have not a devil.* Do they charge you with some scandalous sin? Answer simply and calmly, *I have not that sin.*

2. Should the charge be urged, humility will come to the rescue, and the opportunity for its exercise is a beautiful one. Say that you have other sins, and even greater ones, that you are miserable, and that your misery should rather create compassion than anger; that were it not for God's grace you would be guilty of far more grievous sins. This sort of humility does not damage truth in the least. Was it not a sentiment of true humility and humble truth that inspired David when he cried, *Unless the Lord had been my helper, my soul had almost dwelt in hell?* (Ps. xciii. 17.)

3. If the charge be still repeated, silence then will assert its claims, *As a man that heareth not, and has no reproofs in his mouth* (Ps. xxxvii. 15). A reproof is like oil feeding the lamp; silence extinguishes it like water. You reply: Irritation follows. You are silent: Peace is the result.

4. Yet silence may prove fruitless! Then patience will shield you with an impenetrable breast-plate. *Patience hath a perfect work* (James i. 4.). Patience, hand in hand with charity, places us in possession of the beatitude of those who hunger after, and are persecuted for the sake of, justice.

5. Is the calumny dyed in even darker colours? Constancy will then render patience doubly strong, and will resist the most violent attacks.

6. And when calumny still perseveres, longanimity will give patience a longer life.

7. Then to longanimity succeeds perseverance, which reaches even the goal, and carries the prize.

8. Lastly, prudence, meekness, and modesty in words shall also be represented. But, above all, will reign, seated on a throne, like a queen, over all other virtues, their life and their soul, Charity Divine. She it is who dashes burning coals on the face of those who calumniate us, makes us bless those who curse us, and pray for our persecutors. She it is who changes our persecutors into our protectors, and those who have calumniated us into our defenders.

XV.—THE CHARGE OF SOULS.

The Council of Trent pronounces this charge terrible, even for Angels, and St. Gregory calls it the *art of arts*.

Once a parish priest complained to our Saint of the difficulty of his charge, and especially of the indocility of his people and their stiff-neckedness. He replied that their stiff-neckedness was less remarkable than the sensitiveness of those parties who become disheartened and are impatient when they do not meet with a success corresponding to their endeavours and exhortations. The farmer is not to be blamed for the failure of the crops, but yea, for his neglect in preparing and tilling the soil. To be thus discouraged, only betrays great self-love, and a zeal devoid of wisdom. St. Paul put it well to us in the person of Timothy. He says: *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke in all* PATIENCE *and doctrine* (ii Tim. iv. 2.). See! the word "patience" is the key-note of the whole system. Only through this virtue we can possess our souls in patience.

Apropos of this, Blessed Francis would quote that *onus animarum, non validarum est, sed infirmarum*, to wit: It is not a charge of strong but of weak souls, which saying of St. Bernard he illustrated thus:

"No doubt wings are a burden to birds, and yet deprived of it they could not fly. The charge of pious and virtuous souls is a bouquet of sweet flowers, the carrying whereof is a charm to him who carries it. The charge of such souls aids the Pastor to make gigantic strides in the way of the divine commandments.

"Again: see that shepherd who has in charge a hundred sheep. Let one of them injure itself: he takes it up on his shoulders, and that *one* is more burdensome to him than all the rest, who frisk about the meadow with nimble feet. Souls who know the path of virtue and walk over it by themselves, give a pastor very little care, whereas his watchfulness and anxiety is greatly taxed by those who are imperfect and impatient of rule."

XVI.—INSPIRATION AND RESPIRATION.

He was wont to say that by interior recollection we retire in God, and draw God within us.

But when are we to practice it? always and everywhere! Neither meals, nor company, nor employment, nor any circumstances whatever can prevent its exercise, whilst it will never clash with any duty of life. Indeed, this interior recollection is like a salt that seasons all kinds of dishes. It simply consists in inwardly looking to oneself and to God, to oneself in God, to God in oneself, and the simpler this introspection is, the better.

Aspirations are short, but vivid bounds of the soul towards God, and the more vehement and fervent, the better. Shortness is their characteristic beauty. St. Bruno would simply exclaim: *O Goodness!* St. Francis: My God! my all! St. Augustin: O Love! oh! to die to oneself! oh! to reach God!

These practices are to the soul what inspiration and respiration are to the body. We inspire the fresh air, and we

expire the warm breath : thus by interior recollection we draw God within us, by ejaculations and aspirations we throw ourselves into the arms of his goodness.

XVII.—WHAT RESOLVES TO MAKE IN OUR MEDITATIONS.

Certain persons will become so discouraged with the exercise of mental prayer as even to give it up, not because they find it difficult, but because they fail in keeping the good resolutions made whilst engaged in it. Our Saint looked upon this as a great deception of the devil. "Do we not wait," he would say, "a whole year before we reap one single blade of wheat, and years and years before we pluck the apple that grew of the seed we have planted ? In fact, we should never abandon the exercise of prayer but for occupations of greater importance, and then we must make up for its discontinuance by frequent aspirations.

"During mental prayer, we should place our entire care in forming good resolutions. Although, we may not carry them into practice at once, and we may fail at the first opportunity we have to practice them, and may look behind us, yet such seeds will in course of time take root, and push forward in another season, even when we may have forgotten them.

"And if even by making them we only train ourselves to a sort of spiritual warfare, they will nevertheless be pleasing to God, who sees our thoughts from afar off, and knows all our ways. Should we even do no more than the youth who practice horsemanship in a riding school, or passages at arms under a drilling sergeant, it would be something yet, and, as the old saying is, "such will run to-day who will fight to-morrow.

"Let us, then, take courage, and say with the prophet : *In the Lord I put my trust : how then do you say to my soul : Get thee away from hence to the mountain, like*

a sparrow? (Ps. x. 1.) Yes, we shall love and serve God some d y. him who is my salvation and my strength and my true God."

XVIII.—NEVER CEASE TO DISTRUST YOURSELF.

Of our own we have only malice and infirmities. As for eternal and supernatural things *we are* not *sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.* (II. Cor. iii. 5.). Hence we need to live in continual distrust of ourselves. Our Blessed Bishop, following the doctrine laid down in his favorite book, "The Spiritual Combat," set this distrust of oneself as the foundation stone of the soul's interior perfection.

It is a common saying that distrust begets safety, inasmuch as it puts one on his guard: and so it is in spiritual matters. *He that neglecteth his way shall die,* says the Wise Man (Prov. xix. 16), who adds that *he that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little* (Eccl. xix. 1.). Like the rope dancer, who holds the balance pole to keep an equilibrium in his perilous path, thus must we, in this slippery and dangerous walk of life, balance ourselves between fear and hope, stand as it were on two feet, one distrust of ourselves, the other confidence in God. A remembrance of our past sins will foster in us a salutary fear lest we relapse into them, or even do worse, inasmuch as a relapse is the most dangerous symptom in sickness. On the other hand, we must never become elated by the experience of our past virtue and the consciousness of accumulated merits and good actions. For, our weakness is so great that we may in one moment fall and loose all we have gathered in years of labor and patient toil. One spark of fire will destroy a rich mansion with all the treasures gathered therein for years and years.

Hear our Bishop: "We need be watching every instant of our life, no matter how far we may have advanced in perfection; for our passions are ever alive, even after many years of life in a cloister, and after having attained great proficiency in perfection. Thus a monk of St. Pacomius, Sylvan by name, who in the world had been a play-actor, became converted, embraced religious life, and spent his year of probation, indeed, twenty years more, in the practice of the most examplary mortification, never exhibiting the least act that bore the imprint of his former profession. But once it entered into his head that he might play some joke, in order to amuse his brethren, flattering himself that his former predilections were entirely suppressed, and would never reassert their ascendency over his disposition. But the unwary man only deceived himself, for the passion for fun became suddenly so excited, that from playfulness he passed into buffoonery, and went so far that only for the guarantee which a monk of great authority entered for his future behavior, it was resolved to expel him from the monastery. He resumed his penitential and austere habits, and Sylvan became a great Saint."

XIV.—HOW TO KNOW WHETHER WE ADVANCE IN VIRTUE.

Blessed Francis often said that a love to be corrected is a good sign of our advancing in virtue, as it is a sign of a strong stomach to be able to digest coarse food. *The just man shall correct me in mercy, and shall reprove me: but let not the oil of the sinner* (i. e. the flatterer,) *fatten my head* (Ps. 140, 5.). To take an admonition in good part, evinces a hatred of sin, and shows that one falls more by surprise than from malice. Whoso loves correction, shows that he loves the virtue contrary to the sin for which he is reprimanded, and will thereby draw renewed strength to avoid it. The sick man, who is earnest in his wish to

get well, will take all prescribed medicines, no matter how unpleasant. Whoso wishes to gain in virtue, which is the true health of the soul thinks not of the difficulties he has to meet, not even of bitter and severe corrections.

Again, a person will evince a sincere wish to advance in virtue by the practice of humility, the acts whereof are both active and passive. People, in general, like the former but will not cherish the latter. We love to humble ourselves either in words or in acts, but we cannot bear to be humbled by others. Every one wishes to be paid in the coin he likes. Every one likes to reprimand and correct himself, but not to be corrected and reprimanded by others. Yet, it is certain that an ounce of humiliation received at another man's hand is worth a hundred pounds administered by ourselves.

XX.—ABOUT ONE'S SPEECH.

Words reveal the man: the tongue has its roots in the heart. No matter how guarded and cunning a man may be, watch his words, study his language, and you will easily know whether his judgment is correct and his will good. Thus does the physician to ascertain the condition of his patient. We form an estimate of the root by the nature of the leaves and fruits of the tree. Often did our Saint express his belief that by retrenching the faults of the tongue, one-third of the sins of the world would be done away with: *If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man* (James iii. 2.).

XXI.—A PREACHER LOSES HIS MEMORY.

A certain friar, who enjoyed great reputation for learning and eloquence, had a great wish to display his powers before our Bishop, in Annecy, in the hope of being engaged for a term in Lent or Advent. Our prelate who never

refused his chair to an orthodox divine, was ready on his throne, surrounded by his Chapter, clergy, and people to listen to this wonder of eloquence, who was also honored by a large concourse of his confrères, who had taken pains to bespeak a large audience for him throughout the city. But lo! by some secret judgment of God, the good monk soon became embarrassed, lost the thread of his discourse, floundered, and at last broke up, and descended from the pulpit. He was overwhelmed with shame, foolishly so, but to such a degree that he became frantic. He uttered expressions akin to blaspheming, venting his feelings even against God. He came to such a pass as to wish for death, refusing to take food, and unable to rest by day or by night. Blessed Francis was called in, and at last prevailed on the silly man to take nourishment, under threat of eternal damnation. To this he at last yielded, on condition that he should be removed not only from his province, but from the country altogether. Greatly did the holy Prelate wonder how a man professing an institute of great severity could be so immortified in his passions. He remarked that he wished there was less of external but more of interior self-denial. "I shall wish in him," added blessed Francis, "a little less of the science that puffeth and more of the charity which edificth, less self-sufficiency and a little more humility."

Of another man of the same stamp, Cardinal de Berulle said: "Would he had less divinity, but more common sense; he would none the less deserve the title of *Sapientissimus*.

XXII.—ABOUT SPIRITUAL ARIDITY.

It is only children who are fond of sweet things, and do not realize how injurious they are to their health. Thus, persons of weak piety will advance in virtue only in proportion as they receive the manna of interior consolations.

But if assailed with the least aridity, they become sluggard, a prey to discontentment and discouragement. They are like Ephrem's sons who were bold in aiming their shafts at random, but fled at first sight of an enemy.

"We should not act so," said Blessed Francis; "on the contrary, the more God withdraws his consolations, the more we should feel proud to show our fidelity to him. One single act performed in dryness of spirit has more worth than many elicited with tenderness of devotion, for it evinces a stronger love, albeit it is not so feeling nor so agreeable. A gallant soldier will approach danger in cold blood and with determination, whilst the sluggard and the coward must be driven to it.

XXIII.—ABOUT THE MODESTY TO BE OBSERVED IN BED.

Many are apt to throw themselves on their couches to rest without thinking of the eye of God that sees them, or the watch which their guardian angel keeps over them, or of the evil spirits who will tender snares around them. Says our saint: "We must have God before us in all places and at all times, when alone and when in company, yea even when we sleep. A great Saint wrote to his disciple, that he retired to his rest in as composed an attitude as if our Divine Saviour, still in this world, had commanded him to lie down in his presence, and though you do not see him, nor hear his command, act just as if you saw him; for in fact, he is present and holds you in his keeping whilst you are asleep. O my God! how modestly and how devoutly would we lie down if we saw Thee! indeed we would cross our arms over our breasts with utmost devotion."

XXIV.—COMMAND AND PRACTICE OBEDIENCE.

A Sister of the Visitation, being appointed superior,

complained to the Bishop that she would now loose the merit of obedience. "On the contrary," replied he, "it will be increased wonderfully. For, were you to remain a subject, you would have only the merit of obeying one superior; but by your being placed in authority you practice obedience every time you give a command to your sisters."

And because she seemed to be at a loss how to understand this word, he added: "See now, is it not God who commands you to be a superioress over the community? Very well, then, by obeying to this command, and humbly accepting the charge imposed on you, you will command others only through obedience, and all your commands will be real acts of obedience on your part; for they will be as many acts of obedience to the command which you have received to rule over others. For the rest, I am happy to find that you feel an aversion to this charge of commanding others, and a love for the virtue of obedience; for you will thus rule only with love and for love, and this divine love will render your burden light, and the yoke over the rest sweet."

XXV.—ON MENTAL PRAYER.

I once asked our Blessed Bishop, whether it were not better to take only one point for our meditation, and on that to work out one single resolution. He replied that unity and simplicity are the best rule in everything, but above all, in spiritual exercises. Only for beginners he would advise more than one point of meditation. But as regards a multitude of resolutions, he remarked that the more spring was luxuriant in leaves and blossoms, the less honey did the bees gather, as they will flutter about madly and take no pains to draw the materials wherewith to build their honeycombs. Drones make great noise, but do no work.

He also remarked that we could not repeat our good resolutions and aspirations often enough; we should imitate painters and sculptors who complete their works by repeated strokes of the chisel and the brush; thus to make an impression on our hearts, we must repeat the same thing over and over. And as a good swimmer will move arms and legs gently, whilst the unskilful throws them about wildly, and will eventually sink; so, in mental prayer, we should avoid anxiety or over-eagerness, else our prayer will avail very little.

XXVI—ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

Blessed Francis often quoted the saying of St. Anthony, that, "he who prays should be so attentive to God as to forget himself," and explained it thus: "We should keep our soul steady at her work during our prayer, not allowing her to twist around to see what she has been doing, or whether she can be satisfied with her work. Alas! our consolations and pleasure are not always satisfactory in the eyes of God, but only please that miserable love we have for ourselves, outside of God and of his good will. Our Savior proposes children for a pattern of our life; now, see them! they betray no care, especially when they are in the presence of their fathers and mothers, to whom they cling, without reflecting on their own pleasure or satisfaction, taking every thing in good faith, and enjoying it all in simplicity, without any curiosity to consider the causes or effects thereof; love entertains them so, that they cannot think of any thing else. Who is anxious indeed to please the celestial lover with his love, has neither the heart nor the chance to revert to himself, his spirit carrying him incessantly to where his love draws him."

Francis was so partial to unity, that any kind of multiplicity was unpleasant to him. He greatly approved the

principle of St. Thomas, that 'to be a good scholar one must be the man of one book.' Hence for a spiritual reading he advised only one book, not that he rejected all others, but he should make choice of one, studying it carefully and the others would serve as commentaries on the principal one. He followed the same principles in spiritual exercises. He wished every one to have his favorite exercise and to practice it as often as possible; either the presence of God, the best of all; or purity of intention, a most available one; or submission to God's will; or an abandonment into the hands of God; or an entire renunciation of self, which he looked upon as the essence of Christian perfection. He also advised the practice of some particular virtue, whose acts one should repeat more frequently, considering that each Saint generally excels in the practice of some characteristic virtue, and religious orders generally aim, with their rules and institutes, to the cultivation of some especial practice of perfection. Accordingly, he did not hope much of those who skip from book to book, from practice to practice, like a drone buzzing about many flowers and drawing no honey. They are forever studying the science of the Saints, but practice it not; for ever hoarding up riches which they store away *in bags with holes* (Agg. i. 6), and *dig to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water* (Ser. ii. 13), restless spirits that they are, seeking for peace in spiritual riches, wherewith they endeavor to endow themselves, but never arrive to possess them.

On this subject of multiplicity he said that he valued one jaculatory repeated a hundred times more than a hundred aspirations repeated once each. Thus, said he, St. Francis spent all night repeating "My God and my all!" and St. Theresa "Whatever is not God is nothing!" thereon feasting their souls, as the bee feasts on a rich flower.

"Those who sit at a banquet, and pick a bit here and there, and eat a little of each dish, derange their stomach, in which such an indigestion is created that they cannot rest at night, and feel most uncomfortable. Thus it happens with those souls, who wish to taste of all methods and systems leading to perfection; their mental organs and powers have not strength enough to digest and practice all these means, and hence arises a crudity and indigestion which destroys that peace and tranquillity in the Lord which is the *one thing necessary*, which *Mary hath chosen*, and *shall not be taken away from her.*"

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SEVENTEENTH PART.

I.—ABOUT SICK PEOPLE.

The Apostle says, *Who is weak, and I am not weak?* (*a*) Our blessed Bishop was animated by like feelings. He was all sympathy for the sick, either in body or soul. It was a saying of his that during the noviceship in religious communities too much account was taken of corporal and spiritual infirmities, as if such houses were not in fact like so many hospitals, where care should be taken of the weak and the infirm. It was true, however, that as there are cases of contagious diseases, when it becomes necessary to separate the healthy from the infected, so in religious families, persons are often found so incorrigible and inept, that they cannot be admitted to profession. "For my part," he added, "I am very partial to sick people, and I greatly fear that the inconvenience to which they give occasion may create a spirit of unnecessary prudence, which counsels the discharge of them at the expense of charity. Accordingly, I will always take the part of the sick, provided they are humble, and acknowledge the good offices of charity. They will afford the sisters a very fine opportunity to practice virtue."

II.—LIVING AT COURT.

Blessed Francis never felt, whilst at Court, as if he could not attend to the study of perfection. "After all," said

(*a*) II. Cor. xi. 29.

he, "David and Saint Louis became saints amid the turmoil and vexations of their courts. St. Bernard never interrupted his progress in Divine love, although he lived in courts, or followed the armies of great princes, in which circumstances he endeavored to turn the affairs of the world to the greatest glory of God. Places he changed, but not his heart, nor the object of his heart, Divine love. In his own language, they were changes of his person only, but *he* never changed, no matter how varied the occupations, and sometimes in opposition to each other: affairs and conversations did not affect him nor gave coloring to his life, for he rested on God, white in his purity, fervent in his charity, and always in perfect humility."

"The Israelites," said he once, "were right in refusing to sing the sacred canticles of Sion before the Babylonians. Yet, we should take into consideration that those poor wretches not only were among the Babylonians, but were their slaves. Indeed, such as are slaves to courtly favors, to preferments at the palace, and to the fame of war, alas! can never sing the canticle of Divine love: whereas, he who is at court, or on the field, only from duty, has God's assistance to protect him, and the sweets of heaven are a balm to his heart, and a charm to preserve him from the contagion of such places."

As some fish born in salt water, will even improve by being transplanted in fresh rivers, there are souls, who amidst libertinism will redouble their fervor, and whom irreligion spurs to achieve the triumphs of virtue.

"I must confess that in negotiations and in business, especially on worldly affairs, I am a poorer priest than ever, because, thank God, I have learned at court to be even more simple and less worldly," said blessed Francis to a person in his confidence.

III.—DISCOURAGEMENT.

Francis qualified discouragement as the most cowardly of temptations. Should the enemy succeed in making us lose our hope of success in the attainment of perfection, we are left at his mercy, and our ruin will be an easy work for him. To prevent this danger our Bishop spoke thus: "Bear patiently with all, but especially with yourself; I mean, do not get vexed with your imperfections, and have always courage enough to struggle with them. I shall be satisfied if you start anew every day. There is no better means to help one's advancement in spiritual life, than to be always beginning anew, and never to think that we have done enough."

IV.—ON SUFFERINGS.

My Son, when thou comest to the service of God..... prepare thy soul for temptation (*a*). We should never lose sight of this admonition of the Wise Man. For, even the Son of God entered into his glory through the gate of many tribulations. "We need often offer our heart in sacrifice to the Divine love even on the altar of the cross," says blessed Francis: "for on that altar he has sacrificed his own heart for the love of us. The cross is the royal avenue and gate leading to the temple of sanctity. Seek it elsewhere and you will not find it."

In the midst of prosperity, it is very difficult to love God as he should be loved, for prosperity will entice our heart and draw it from God, whereas the road, through crosses and adversities, is straight and not embarrassing: it offers no danger of halting, to dally with creatures—aye more, the love of God, the acts whereof are practiced amid suffer-

(*a*) Eccli. II. 1.

ings, never stoops at the suffering itself, which, after all, has no charm but in the hand of God which dispenses it.

V.—ON SOULS EXCESSIVELY TENDER OF THEMSELVES.

Like steel, which, when best tempered, is both stronger and most pliable, our blessed Bishop, endowed as he was with the sweetest and most sympathizing disposition, was at the same time all vigor and power. Hence he never liked souls flimsy and inordinately tender about themselves. He made a distinction between that weakness which arises from infirmity, and this inordinate tenderness. Weakness is natural in us, and hence he was compassionate towards poor sinners, especially when their sin was the result of surprise and human frailty.

He considered this tenderness, whether it regarded the soul or the body, as much opposed to solid and genuine devotion as anxiety and over-eagerness, none the less the offsprings of self-love. He never complained of even the greatest annoyance or suffering that might have affected either his soul or his body, and on his last sickness hardly an audible sigh escaped his lips when a red hot iron was applied to his neck, to rouse him from stupor. This generous spirit of endurance he had so well infused into the souls of the Sisters of the Visitation, that they have given wonderful proofs of it in the midst of great sufferings, privations, and persecutions. We have seen the instance of that sainted sister, who charged herself with cowardice, because in her last moments she felt tempted to complain of her sufferings (V. P. II ch. 25.). He expected that sick people would state the symptoms of their sickness candidly and simply, without exaggeration and without the least betrayal of anxiety or tenderness on their part. He moreover wished them to follow all the orders and prescrip-

tions of physicians, thereby giving them honor, as we are commanded by the Lord (*a*).

To a soul, that complained of aridity in prayer, and betrayed too much sensitiveness, he remarked, that "we are always attached to the sweetness, pleasure, and delightfulness of consolations; and yet the asperity of aridity is far more profitable. It is true, St. Peter was partial to Mount Thabor and fled from Calvary, yet the latter was far more fruitful than the former, and the blood shed on the one is far more desirable than the brightness diffused on the other. It is far better to eat bread without sugar, than sugar without bread."

VI.—ABOUT CHANGING ONE'S CONFESSOR.

Virtue, as well as truth, should always avoid all extremes. Hence greatly err those who either have no fixed director, or are so attached to one that they will rather abstain from confession than to approach a stranger. And yet the second class are even more blamable, inasmuch as they betray human fear, attachment to the creature, and a slavish spirit very much in opposition to God's spirit, which is to be found only where a holy freedom reigns. In accordance with this doctrine the Council of Trent has decreed that extraordinary confessors should be given to nuns three or four times in the year, and our Bishop has made it a rule that the Visitation should have them regularly during the four Ember Weeks, and every time a sister would ask for one, provided it was not from caprice or partiality, for, whilst we must always yield to a rational request, we should never encourage whims or provide for imaginary needs. Blessed Theresa was very considerate on this point, and Blessed Francis thus once wrote to a

(*a*) Eccl. xxxviii. 1.

superior: "We should not be whimsical in changing confessors without some good motive: but we must at times change, as there may be some cogent reason for it; and Bishops should never have their hands so tied, as not to be free to change them, when it becomes expedient, and especially when the sisters beg for the change unanimously, or the Spiritual Father himself request to be relieved."

VII.—ON FALLS.

He wished that one would pick himself up, after a fall, quietly and peacefully, lest too much hurry or chagrin trip us over into a heavier fall. "When we happen to fall by a sudden impulse of self-love or from our passions let us prostrate ourselves before God, as soon as practicable, and let us cry with sentiments of confidence and humility, *Have mercy on me, O God, for I am weak* (*a*). Let us arise in peace and tranquillity, knotting again the chain of our love, and then continue our work. We should not snap the chain, nor give up the lute, because it is out of tune. Let us, instead, examine whence the discordance comes, and gently strain or relax the chord, as the case may require."

"True," he would add, "we must have the soul of a judge over our actions, but as the judge who hurries a sentence, or pronounces it, while swayed by some passion, is apt to be unjust, a danger easily avoided if reason is at the helm of his actions, so to judge ourselves with justice, we must keep our spirit tranquil and peaceful, not in indignation and anger."

VIII.—ABOUT EXCUSES.

In general the excuse of one's faults is less defensible than an accusation of them, yet one may go too far in prac-

(*a*) Ps. vi. 3.

tising the latter. True, *the just is first accuser of himself* (*a*), that he may be cured of his faults by salutary corrections. And it is also true that it is rather wicked to excuse oneself, inasmuch as to defend the evil one has done, seems tantamount to insist upon that the action is defensible on a ground of justice. Had not our first parents excused themselves, but in its stead had they acknowledged their error they would have crushed the serpent as he stung, and God who coaxed them by that kind appeal "Adam, where art thou?" would is his mercy have pardoned them. Thus it was that David cried: *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: and a door round about my lips: incline not my heart to evil words: to make excuses in sins* (*b*).

Here is the advice of our blessed father on this subject: "Be just, neither excuse nor accuse your poor soul, but with mature consideration, lest by excusing it without foundation you render it insolent, or by accusing it at random and with levity you crush all courage out of it, and make it pusillanimous. Walk in simplicity and you will feel confidence in your walk."

Once I heard this remarkable sentence from his lips: "Whos excuses himself unjustly and artfully, truly, and openly accuses himself: whereas whoso accuses himself with simplicity and humbly, deserves to be excused most kindly, and to be pardoned most charitably."

IX.—SOME ADVICE ABOUT TEMPTATIONS.

Some persons are often sorely tried not being able to distinguish whether the temptation is in, or arises from, their hearts. Here is the touch-stone: see whether you like the temptation or not, and learn, that if sin cannot hurt you when you loath it, much less the temptation will.

(*a*) Prov. xviii. 17. (*b*) Ps. cxl. 3.

Blessed Francis says: "Mark it well; as long as the temptation is not pleasing to you, there is nothing to fear; for, would it displease you, if you wished to yield to it?"

To dally with the temptation, not to arise manfully and fight it away, will betray in you a liking for it. But if we are annoyed by it, and are earnest in our hatred of its object, that very temptation to commit sin turns into the means of gaining a glorious triumph of virtue.

And were you to feel anxious as to whether you had been pleased with it, that very anxiety would prove that you have *not* been pleased.

But as regards dallying with temptations, and taking pleasure in them, if such feelings have forestalled the full use of reason, they are of not much importance. This pleasure cannot be *morose*, and therefore, it is not sinful, unless it is accompanied by voluntary malice and a consent.

Yet it is somewhat difficult to know clearly whether we have consented or not. *From my secret sins deliver me, O Lord*, cried the royal prophet (*a*), and he meant those sins which he could not clearly understand. Here our Prelate says: "Whenever you doubt whether you have consented to evil or not, take the doubt as a negative. For sin is never committed without consent of the will, as sin is always voluntary. On the other hand, be not too easy to believe that you have given consent, for if your heart does not reproach you, you should feel at perfect ease."

X.—VANITY.

The vanity of intellect exalteth one above what one really is, while that of the will, still more perverse, prompts one to wish for a higher condition, on the ground that one deserves it.

(*a*) Ps. xviii. 13.

Our blessed Father always thought that he had ascended high enough in the ranks of the church, and he sincerely desired to descend, and retire into solitude. And again, the high esteem he universally enjoyed was a source of great unhappiness to him. To a friend, who once remarked that it must have been difficult to preserve a genuine humility amid so many honors, he replied: "You do me great favor in recommending this holy humility. For you know, that a wind imprisoned in the valley between our mountains will destroy the little flowers, and uproot the trees: but I, elevated as I am a little too high in the episcopate, experience more annoyance from it. O Lord, save us: command this wind of vanity, and there will come great calm!"

XI.—HOLY COMMUNION.

Says our Bishop: "The Savior could not offer himself to us in a sweeter, more lovely, or more attractive mystery than the Eucharist. We should annihilate ourselves in receiving holy communion, as our Savior *emptied himself* (Phil. II. 7.) to communicate himself to us, lowering the footstool of his heaven to accommodate himself to our lowness."

In behalf of a soul that, through false humility, abstained from communion, he wrote: "Tell her to go to communion boldly and peacefully, to show her appreciation of the spouse, who, to be united to us, emptied and lowered himself sweetly, even to become nourishment and food to us, who are the food and nourishment of worms. Indeed, whoso receives communion, as the spouse wishes us to receive it, becomes annihilated, and says to our Lord —Melt me, crush me, annihilate me, change me wholly into thyself!—Of nothing in this world have we such full possession, and perfect dominion as food, which we assimilate into our nature, and to our conservation; yet our

Savior arrived to such an excess of love for us as to make himself our food. What, then, should we not do in order that he may possess us, and transform us into himself wholly and entirely after his own pleasure ?"

XII.—AWAIT AND ABIDE BY THE LORD.

We *await* the Lord, if in tranquillity of spirit we look for the fulfilment of his promises. This blessed hope renders the souls in Purgatory perfectly tranquil, and their patience triumphs over their sufferings. Only the manly and generous Christian possesses this hope so tranquil and so firm. Of such, Isaias says : *They that hope in the Lord, shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint* (*a*).

To *abide by* the Lord means that we willingly endure all the trials that it may please him to send us, with that firmness of courage which *hopes against hope*, and repeats with Job : *Although He should kill me I will trust in him* (*b*).

XIII.—DIE OR LOVE.

St. Theresa's motto was *To Suffer or to Die.* The faithful servant of Christ crucified, she clung so closely to the Cross, that she lived only for the purpose of suffering for the love of him. The seraphic St. Francis was inspired by the same sentiments, and were he to pass only a few days without some suffering he would complain of it to the Lord as if he was forgotten by him. He called poverty his mistress and suffering his sister.

" Unhappy is that death which is not cheered by the Savior's love, and unhappy is a love not hallowed by the

(*a*) xl. 31. (*b*) xiii. 15.

death of the Savior: for to his death we owe the great privilege of divine love, without which neither our actions nor our sufferings could give us access to life eternal."

"Love or Die: Die or Love. To die wholly to the love of ourselves in order that we may live to that of Jesus, so that we may not die eternally, but on the contrary, live in thy eternal love, O Savior of our souls! that we may sing for all eternity, *Vive* Jesus! I love Jesus! *Vive* Jesus, whom I love! I love Jesus who liveth and reigneth for ever and evermore! Amen.

"I wish to die or love God; death or love; for, a life without love is indeed worse than death."

XIV.—THE PEACE OF THE HEART AMID PERPLEXITIES.

He who has God in view in all his actions, enjoys the most profound calm, even in the midst of the most discordant agitations, which he also refers to the honor of Him who either sends or permits them, and thus they are subservient to the only end of his pretensions, which are to honor God in all things and on all occasions. How preposterous in those who have devoted themselves to the service of God, in holy institutes, to complain that they are employed in offices of too much distraction! Only those employments can be called distractive, which separate us from God, and sin alone can effect that separation.

Read now what our Bishop said about it: "Let us be wholly for God even in the midst of as much confusion as the diversity of worldly things can subject us to. How better can we prove our fidelity than in the midst of difficulties? Alas! solitude has its battles, and the world its agitations. We should preserve courage in both, for heaven's help awaits all who put their trust in God, and who humbly and affectionately beseech his fatherly assistance. Beware lest you change the care you must have of

yourself and of things into anxiety and disquietude; and however far you sail on the waves, and against the wind of many agitations, look always to heaven, and say to Our Lord: O God! it is for Thee that I sail and steer, be Thou my guide and my pilot. But, then, oh! think of the joys we shall have; when in port, how consoled for all the labors endured to gain it! Now, we are making for that port through all these storms, provided our heart is right, our intention good, our courage firm, our eye fixed on God, and in him our whole trust confined. If at times our stomach sickens at the violence of the tempest, and our head becomes dizzy, let us not become bewildered: but as soon as we recover, let us draw breath, and take a better aim. I am confident you walk unfailingly between your good resolutions; I am sure of it. Be not then put out of countenance for these faint assaults of disquietude and annoyances, brought on by the multiplicity of domestic affairs, oh! no; for it all will only help you to practice those dear and endearing virtues which our Lord has taught us. Believe me, true virtue is not fostered by uninterrupted interior peace, no more than good fish will thrive in the stagnating waters of a swamp."

EIGHTEENTH PART.

I.—ABOUT REPUTATION.

Blessed Francis was never affected by the tributes of esteem which were plentifully offered to him. Attacked once with a horrible calumny which was spread far and wide, he simply remarked : "I have humbled myself, and did not look for any good that I might gain by defending myself, but I hid my grief. This patience has helped me to plunge my heart deeper in the love of God, and render the fire of my meditation more burning. I called upon God as my protector and my refuge in this trial. It is for thee, O God of truth ! to deliver me. Oh ! deliver me from the calumny of men."

To a friend greatly concerned for the Bishop's reputation he wrote : "After all, God knows what degree of reputation I need in the service in which he will employ me, and I wish neither more nor less than it will please him."

II.—MELANCHOLY.

As a state of unalloyed *joy* constitutes the happiness of the Blessed in heaven, so the blessedness of the Just on earth consists in joy, not that, however, which is *short* and *for a moment* such as the hypocrite will have (*a*). True joy springs from interior peace, which cannot be possessed unless conscience is good. It is of this *joy*, of God and in God, that the Apostle speaks in such glowing terms. The

(*a*) Job. xx. 5.

Bishop thought so much of this joy that in it he placed the happiness of this life. And hence he was the declared enemy of all sadness and grief.

Listen to his advice: "Repose quietly in peace; feed your heart on the sweetness of the celestial love, without which our hearts have no life; and our life no happiness. Yield not to sadness, because it is the enemy of devotion. Why should a faithful servant become sad about him who shall be our joy forever? Sin alone should ever give us unhappiness and annoyance, and even then a joy and holy consolation should be mingled with the pain with which sin affects us."

The royal prophet enjoyed the purest joy amidst the bitter bitterness with which he wept over his sin.

III.—A DEAD LIFE AND A LIVING DEATH.

"We should live a dead life, and die a death living and vivifying in the life of our King and sweet Savior,' said he many times. It is the language of St. Paul. *You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God* (*a*). *Christ died for all: that they also who live, may not live to themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again* (*b*). *And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me* (*c*).

He lives a dead life, who lives not after his senses and natural inclinations, but according to the spirit and supernatural inspirations. Dead to nature he liveth to grace.

He dies a death living and vivifying, who mortifieth the flesh and its lust, that the spirit may live a life of grace, which grace having been obtained for us by Our Lord Jesus Christ at the cost of his life and death, we cannot live with him unless with him we die, nor can we reign with him unless with him we suffer

(*a*) Col. iii. 3. (*b*) II. Cor. v. 15. (*c*) Gal. ii. 20.

IV.—MORTIFICATION.

Interior mortification is far superior to the exterior, inasmuch as it is not subject to hypocrisy, vanity or indiscretion.

And, again, such mortifications as are sent to us by the Lord, or caused by men through his permission are better than those which we choose of our own free will.

On this point, great many spiritual persons break down. Some who wear a hair-shirt, and fast, and do many other severe penitential acts, will fret at an unkind look, or resent a word. Others will spend much time in prayer and other devotional practices, and yet the least disappointment or loss will set them crazy, or furious.

Alas! we wish to serve God not after his divine pleasure but after our own. To cure a soul of this evil disposition, thus did our Saint address her: "Kiss often the Crosses which our Divine Lord has been pleased to place in your way. Stop not to examine whether they are made of costly and sweet scented wood. More of the Cross in them if made of common and ugly wood. It is strange, I always think of this and cannot play on any other tune. Indeed, it is the canticle of the Lamb, somewhat plaintive, it is true, but harmonious withal, and it has the true ring: *Father, not my will, but Thine be done* (*a*)! Mary Magdalen seeks her Lord when he stands before her. She asks him where he is. She did not see him in the appearance she wished to see him; and for this she was not satisfied, she is in quest of him that she may find him under another appearance. She wishes to see him in his dress of glory; and yet she knew him, when he said: *Mary.*

"Remember, then, it is our Lord in the garb of a gardener that you meet every day, and in all the incidents of

(*a*) Luke xxii. 42.

ordinary mortifications. But you wish that he would offer you something more brilliant to endure: but, good Lord! the brilliant is not always the best. Do you believe that he calls you, Mary, Mary? Ah! before allowing you to see him in his mantle of glory he will plant in your garden many flowers, humble and lowly, but pleasing to him: it is for this that he wears that garb. Oh! that our hearts be forever united to his, and our wills to his good pleasure!"

V.—LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBORS.

It is easy to engraft a supernatural love on the natural affection we have for our neighbor; but it is extremely difficult to love him with a pure supernatural love.

True, it is not forbidden to love one for the good he has done to us; it is the natural affection of *friendship*. Yet it is very difficult to free this love of friendship from every feeling of love for ourselves, so that we love another independent of what personal benefit we may enjoy; it is also very difficult to reach that state of supernatural love, where we love our neighbor *only* in God. To obtain this, we must have advanced very far in perfection, and feel that we love our friend equally as well as our enemy. Blessed Francis says: "We must possess a heart good, sweet, and affectionate towards our neighbor, especially when he appears unattractive or repulsive. For in that case we love him out of reverence for the Savior, and thus love becomes more noble and more valuable, because it is purer and free of all worldly alloy."

VI.—A SAD TIME.

The carnival was a sad season for the Bishop, because of the sins committed in those days, and the influence it has even on good Christians, who seem to relax in their piety

and devotion. He said once: "Know, that I am in my days of sadness. From the Epiphany of our Lord to Ash-Wednesday, I experience strange feelings in my heart, for however miserable, nay detestable I may be, it fills me with grief to witness so much piety lost; I mean so many souls becoming relaxed. On these two last Sundays I have remarked that our communions were less numerous by one half; it has grieved me much. For, although those who have kept away may not become wicked, why do they cease to be good? for no account whatever, for a little vanity! Is it not so?"

Apropos of dances, our Bishop has often spoken thus:

1. Whilst you dance many souls are suffering for sins committed at a dance or in consequence of it.

2. Whilst you dance many devout souls employ their time in praying or singing the praises of the Lord. What a difference!

3. Whilst at your dance, many souls have passed away in terrible agonies, and thousands upon thousands of men and women suffer most intensely on their beds at home, in hospitals, or on public roads. Alas! they have no rest, and you have no compassion for them? Yet, when one day you will be suffering as much, other people will be dancing as you now do.

4. Think that our Lord, our Lady, the Angels and Saints witness your dances. How you must excite their pity with your frivolity and nonsense!

5. Alas! whilst you are at your dances, time flies, and death drawing near, mocks you, and keeps time with your movements by the groans and lamentations of the sick and the dying (*a*).

(*a*) A sensible little work was published not long ago with this title: "Balls and Dancing Parties condemned by the Scriptures, &c. Advices to young persons regarding them. From the French of Abbé Hulot, by a young man, pp. 216, 18mo. Boston, P. Donahoe, 1857."

He once told the conversion of a libertine, much to the purpose of this subject. Two young men, one of them non-catholic, schoolmates of his in Paris, spent a night in scurrilous dances at the Faubourg Saint-Jacques. Whilst there they heard the Matin bell at the Carthusian Church. The non-catholic youth asked of his companion what the sound meant, and having heard such an explanation of it as the other could give, "*O Dieu !*" he exclaimed, "but the occupation of those monks is different from ours ! they join the Angels in their exercises and we act like beasts !" The following day anxious to test the truth of what he had heard, he repaired to the church, at the hour of divine office, and found the monks assembled in their choir, standing upright in the stalls like so many white statues in a row of niches, insensible to every other occupation but that of singing the praises of the Lord, with countenances inspired by an angelical devotion. The astonished youth remained riveted to the spot, enchanted at the sight of such sincere worship offered to God, and yielding to that grace, a first ray of which had fallen upon him in the place of abomination, not long after he was received into the bosom of the Church (*a*).

(*a*) A conversion parallel to this is thus narrated at p. 49 of CARMEL, or *The Conversion of Hermann, the Pianist*. Boston: P. Donahoe, 1863.

"This contrast between these two classes, one breathing in the quiet atmosphere of nocturnal prayer, the other revelling among the orgies of iniquity, reminds the writer of the wonderful way, by which divine grace was once pleased to lead back to the path of virtue a wayward youth.

"An acquaintance of his had often been heard to boast that he was not such a fool as to believe in the vaunted devotion, and abnegation of monastic orders. They are only a set of hypocrites! who will ever believe that they rise at midnight to sing Matins! bah! the convent bell was rung indeed every night, but it was only a *make believe*. Well: so it happened that on a certain beautiful moonlight night, our friend was wending his way home from the *casino* at a rather early hour, it was just a little before 'the iron tongue of midnight had told twelve!'

"The street lay by a church attached to a convent of Capuchin Friars. The *only one* conventual bell, at the stroke of twelve, pealed forth in-

VII.—DESIRE AND LOVE.

Of all reasonable affections *love* is the first and most noble production of the *will*, and *desire* is the first offspring of love. Desire is the love of a good that is absent, and joy is the love of a good possessed. Whosoever wishes to love well, wishes also to have good desires, and the more one loves what one wishes for, the more the object of our wishes is loved. A wish to love is a great advancement towards this love, and after one loves God, to wish to love him yet more and more will prove a great incentive and an excellent

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humble but silver tones the hours of Matins! The libertine answered the summons with a ribald laugh, and proposed to his associates to watch at the church door, and 'find out for themselves the imposture of those lazy monks, who lie in their comfortable couches, digesting their wine, while the devotees in the neighborhood are such fools as to believe that they are singing psalms in the choir.'

"The party halted, sat on the sill of the church-door, and indulged in impertinent remarks at the expense of the friars. Wonderful are the ways of the Lord, truly! while the foolish youth lay in ambuscade to ferret out what he was pleased to call the imposture of monks, the mercy of God lay waiting for him to overshadow his soul with the mantle of his grace. Just as the midnight silence reigned most deep, and no other sign of life was perceptible but the heavy breathing of the three companions, hushed in suspense, and the rapid strides of the queen of night, fleecy clouds fleeting before her,—hark! all at once, with well measured tones, from the breasts of a hundred monks, in deep solemn voices issued and swelling under the vault of the temple, re-echoed through its aisles the hallowed laud *Domine labia mea aperies. Thou O Lord will open my lips*.....

"The astonished companions look at the scoffer, whose face had become of an ashy paleness, while with a determination that brooked no resistance, and with a husky voice he said, 'friends, you may go home. I will not!' In vain did they remonstrate, in vain did they even attempt to move him thence by force. On his knees, his face buried in his hands, the *converted* youth continues at those doors of salvation, receiving into his soul the vivifying waters of Divine Mercy, until break of day, when on the opening of the church, he asks for an interview with the venerable guardian of the convent, who can this day vouch for the truth of my statement. He then applies for admission into the order, into which he is received after due probation. I have seen him since, and he has persevered a model of Christian repentance, and a noble monument of God's infinite mercy, and of that Providence which ofttimes plays in the world, and whose delights are to be with the children of man. (Prov. viii.)."

means to further gain in the possession of this love. It is in this sense that Daniel is called *A Man of Desires* (*a*). Who loves rightly, wishes also in a right manner, and seeks in the right direction, and finds grace, and with it life, and accordingly salvation in the Lord.

Francis says: "We should beg nothing of God, so incessantly and so ardently, as the pure and holy love of Our Savior. Oh! but we should desire this love, and we should love this desire! for reason dictates that we should wish to love that which can never be loved enough, and we should love to wish that which can never be desired ardently enough."

VIII.—DEATH.

We call the dead *departed*, because in death we depart from one life to pass into another, altho' the present might better be called *death*, as it is a life which leads us day after day to the grave. Thus an eminent philosopher said that we die every day, because each day takes from us a portion of our life. We are indeed upon this earth like the waters running to mingle with the sea.

Nature has impressed all men with a horror of death. Even our Divine Savior wedding himself to our flesh has been subject to this infirmity, although death was to transfer his sacred humanity to that glory which his divinity already possessed. On the other hand, Holy writ says, that death should not be feared by him who has led a good life (*b*).

The apprehension, however, of the judgments of God, which is the cause of these terrors, has no power over him who

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(*a*) ix. 23.

(*b*) Cardinal Wiseman a few hours before his death, at the close of a most useful life, said that "he felt like a school boy who was going home to his holidays."

is armed with the faith of a blessed hope, grounded not on our merits, but on the infinite goodness of God. We should never compare the enormity of our crimes with the immensity of that infinite mercy which drowns them in the sea of oblivion, as soon as we repent through his divine love. It is only for such as Cain to fall into despair. There is merciful forgiveness with the Lord, and with him plentiful redemption.

To a soul greatly suffering from the terrors of death thus did our Saint bring relief: "Oh! this death is repulsive, truly it is; but there is beyond it a life, reserved for us by our Lord, and one far more desirable than the present. What are we then alarmed about? For however miserable we may be, we can never exhaust that great mercy with which God regards those who have a will to love him, and who have placed their hopes in him. Blessed Cardinal Borromeo, when dying ordered a picture of the Dead Christ to be brought to him, that by that sight he might sweeten his own death. The best remedy against the apprehensions caused by death is to think of him who is our life, and never allow the thought of one to be separated from the other."

True, the sins of our past life will fill us with bitterness and fear: but we should not halt there: but walk on and look up to Faith, Hope, and Charity, and the infinite goodness of God. The feelings thereby inspired will transform our bitter bitterness into peace; our fear, from servile will become filial and pure, and distrust of ourselves will give place to confidence in God.

IX.—INTERIOR SORROWS.

As in corporeal life cloudy days are by far more numerous than the clear and the brilliant ones, so in spiritual li!e

the days of dryness, and desolation, and trial, are more frequent than the days of consolations and heavenly visitations. Hence did David cry : *Restore unto me, O Lord, the joy of thy salvation, and strengthen me with a perfect spirit* (*a*). Yet under such distresses patience works its works of perfection better than ever, as the press gives more wine according as it is more weighed down. Nor should we ever forget that it is in those very days of darkness and desolation that God is nearer to us. Mary and her blessed spouse stood by the cradle of Jesus in the darkness of a winter midnight, whilst the shepherds in their fields were surrounded by a light from heaven, and heard the harmonies of the angels. But in whose company would you prefer to be ? St. Peter cried amid the joys of Tabor, *It is good for us to be here..... let us make here three tabernacles* (*b*) : and yet he knew not what he was saying ; but the faithful soul loves Jesus as truly amid the darkness and distress of Golgotha, and on that summit she loves to raise her tabernacles and dwell with the crucified Redeemer, his heartbroken Mother, and the desolate beloved Disciple. These are all sentiments of our Blessed Francis.

X.—COMPLAINING WITH IMPATIENCE.

Francis thought that complaints are always prompted by some self-love, and if long and repeated, they betray at least great lack of self-denial and devotion. For, after all, what are those complaints good for ? to let the whole world know that your sufferings are great and not deserved ! that you cannot bear them and wish a revenge of some sort ! The wheel that makes the most noise is that which is badly greased and cannot run smooth : thus does the soul that lacks patience complain the loudest. Such weakness of

(*a*) Ps. l. 14. (*b*) Matt. xvii.

spirit is to be pitied, for it is unworthy of a manly follower of the Cross of Christ.

It is not that to complain of one's sufferings is reprehensible under all circumstances. Job complained and yet he stands the pattern of patience. God himself complains of the wickedness of sinners in many passages of the Scripture. Hence we must only regulate the measure and the utterance of our complaints by that *discretion*, which St. Anthony called *the regulator and ruler of the kingdom of virtues.*

"We should guard," says Blessed Francis, "against an imperfection, insidious and latent in its working, and yet very mischievous, and from which few are free. But so it happens that if we have occasion to censure our neighbors, or to complain of them—a thing, however, that should happen but very rarely—we keep on, and on, never making an end of it, and we rehearse our grievances and complaints for ever and ever. It is a mark of a wounded and peevish heart, devoid of true charity. Generous and strong souls are affected only by extraordinary occurrences, and even then they exhibit great moderation." The last remark "moderation," is the touch-stone distinguishing just from unjust complaints.

XI.—INDISCRETION IN AUSTERITIES.

Beginners in spiritual life are very apt to wreck against this rock. They are never satisfied with what they are doing to atone for past offences, and anxious to do too much they spoil everything. The enemy of our salvation does not care with what materials he makes weapons to injure us, and goading fervid souls to perform too much he renders them unfit to do God's work for lack of bodily strength. God expects of us a *rational worship* (*a*). St. Bernard,

(*a*) Rom. xii. 1.

at the beginning of his conversion, stumbled against this block, and at the end of his life he condemned his former austerities as another would the dissipations of one's youth.

I have known a person of great learning and exalted virtue, whom I have vainly endeavored to check in her fervor, but heedless of my forewarnings, only destroyed one of the strongest constitutions. To a religious who from love of penance indulged in austerities far above her natural strength, our Saint gave the following advice: "Inflict not on your weak body any austerity but what is required by the rules. Manage your strength to serve God in spiritual practices, which we are often forced to give up, when we have indiscreetly overtasked that body which should help the soul in their performance." Few even among those who pursue perfection keep right scales; for *the spirit, indeed, being willing*, they overtask the *flesh* which *is weak* (*a*).

XII.—THE GLORY OF GOD THE END OF OUR SALVATION.

"All we do for our salvation aims at the service of God. Our Savior himself worked only for our salvation while in this world."

This saying of blessed Francis means that who works only for the sake of a reward, even a heavenly one, does not aim exclusively at the glory of God. The majority of Christians will say that they endeavor to be good, in order that they may secure their salvation, and if you insist on their explaining what they mean by their salvation, they will betray an anxiety to secure the goods of the life to come. As for glorifying God, they look upon it as an accessory end. And yet God has created Heaven and

(*a*) Matt. xxvi. 41.

all things for his own glory, and whatever man does must end in that glory. The burden of all the psalms of David emphatically expresses this great truth. Hence, whatever we do for our own salvation, must be done for the furtherance of that glory. Thus it is correct to say that our Saviour had, during his terrestrial life, our salvation in view as a proximate end; but as an ultimate one, he referred all to the glory of his Father—a truth he has taken pains to inculcate very often.

XIII. ONE SHOULD BE KIND AND PATIENT TOWARDS HIMSELF.

We are commanded to love our neighbor as we do ourselves; hence, if we must deal with them tenderly, the measure of such tenderness is to be drawn from the behavior towards ourselves. It does by no means imply that we should flatter ourselves no more than we should flatter our neighbors, if we were called upon to correct their faults. We must pour *oil* and *wine*, even as the good Samaritan did. To reprimand our neighbor with words of abuse, will not, certainly, do him good, but will irritate him. Well, if we are to treat our neighbor thus, why should we act differently towards ourselves, when we are told that we must not hate our own flesh. If we are to do unto others as we like it to be done unto ourselves, then we must behave towards ourselves as reason teaches us that we should behave towards others.

A lesson from our Saint: "Immediately upon our committing a fault, let us examine our heart at once, and ask it whether it has not irrevocably resolved to serve God. I hope the response will be *Yes*, and that a thousand deaths will be endured before that resolution is broken. Then put the question: Why doest thou falter now?—why play the coward? The reply will be: I was taken by sur-

prise ; I do not know how, but I feel exceedingly laggard just now. Alas ! you must forgive, for it was the result of weakness, not infidelity. That heart of yours must be corrected gently and peaceably ; it should not be worried and tormented. Well, then, say—my heart, my friend, in the name of God take courage ; let us go on ; let us be on our guard ; let us look up to our help, our God ! We should be charitable towards our soul, and not reprove her harshly, when we know that she does not sin from malice prepense."

He did not like to hear one accusing himself too often, or exaggerating one's faults. We must not deal with our faults over tenderly, but, at the same time, we should not discourage our soul under pretext of humbling her. " Be just," would he say ; " neither accuse nor excuse your poor soul but with mature judgment, lest by excusing it without foundation you render her insolent, or by accusing it indiscreetly you break her courage and make her a coward. Walk in simplicity, and you shall walk with confidence."

Hence he recommended great forbearance towards ourselves, for it is only out of impatience that we feel annoyed at our own faults. A passionate judge cannot administer justice properly. As the work of patience is always perfect, so that of impatience is always imperfect, and often the annoyance felt at one's fault is more sinful than the fault itself.

" Know," he said, " that the virtue of patience gives us the best assurance of perfection ; and if we must practice it towards others, we must practice it also towards ourselves. He who aims at a pure love of God does not need patience so much for others as he does for himself. We must patiently put up with our imperfections, in order to obtain perfection. I say put up patiently, not to encourage or

caress them. Humility is greatly fostered by this forbearance."

XIV.—SUFFICIENCY.

It is an old saying that 'enough' is never missed, and one distresses himself only about the superfluous: and, again, if we live according to nature, we shall never be poor, but if after opinion, we shall never be rich. Thus did our Bishop once congratulate a person who lived satisfied with the little she possessed: "God be praised for the satisfaction you experience with the little he has given you. Continue in your gratitude to him; for, to be satisfied with sufficiency constitutes the true happiness of this temporal and common life, inasmuch as who is not satisfied with that can never be contented. As the book, which you call *yours*, says: 'He who is not satisfied with what is sufficient, cannot be satisfied at all.'"

May it please God, dear sisters, that you never forget this great principle! May the *Rien de trop* (*nothing too much*) be your motto. It is a great fault in common life not to be able to say: *I have enough.*

You well know, that it was the wish of your blessed founder, and a wish often expressed both in your Constitutions and in other writings, that from the moment your houses become endowed with a sufficiency, no more money shall be received on the admission of new sisters than what may be strictly necessary for the support of the Monastery. Never forget this command, so just both in its declaration and in its practice.

XV.—ABOUT LESSER TEMPTATIONS.

The enemy will annoy a heart possessed with a horror for sin only with small temptations. Great temptations we must fight with all arms, small ones we conquer by contempt.

To a soul who had become disheartened, because assailed with temptations against faith, blessed Francis afforded relief in the following words: "You are assailed again by your temptations against faith, and although you encourage them not, they will not leave you. You make no reply to them: very good, my child! But you give them too much thought, and you fear them too much, and they create too much apprehension in your mind: could you overcome all this they would do you no harm. In fact, you are too sensitive about these temptations. You love your faith and you wish that not a single thought against it should ever enter your head; and because a little thought assails you, your spirits fall and you are troubled. You are too jealous on this point of faith, and it seems to you as if the least thing spoiled it. No, no, my child; let the wind pass and let not the rustling of a leaf frighten you as if it were the clash of arms. Not long ago I was near a hive, and some bees alighted on my face: I raised my hand to chase them off. 'Stop,' cried a peasant near by 'have no fear, do not touch them, and they will not hurt you. If you touch them they 'll sting;' I did as he bade me, and not one of them stung me. Believe me, fear not those temptations: do not mind them and they will not harm you. Go on, and heed them not."

I may as well add, that this contempt will conquer both temptations and tempter: for nothing will give an enemy courage so much as to let him think that he is worthy of your putting yourself on your defence against him. Moreover this contempt for temptation is a mark of great progress in virtue, and a sign of great confidence in God.

XVI.—POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD.

The work of preaching is very much like that of the Man in the Gospel who sowed his seed broadcast, not know-

ing how the harvest would turn out. Our blessed bishop once quoted an illustration of this truth: "While in Paris I preached a sermon of the Last Judgment in the Queen's chapel: no controversy. Madam de Perdreauville came to hear me through curiosity, but she was caught in the net, and then and there made up her mind to receive instructions, and in three weeks after she brought her whole family to me for confession, and I stood sponsor at their confirmation. See now, it was not a sermon against heresy and yet it blew direct in the face of heresy. For it was God himself who breathed in mercy for those souls. I have since become more and more convinced that he who preaches with charity, preaches loud enough against heresy, albeit he utters not a word of controversy."

And an experience of thirty-three years has taught me that moral sermons, preached with zeal and devotion, have more power to reconcile protestants, than lectures on controversy, however marked they may be for ability and devotion.

XVII.—THE SAINT'S PORTRAIT.

I have known great servants of God who would never consent to sit for their portraits' considering it an act of great vanity. Our bishop, on the contrary, cheerfully yielded to such requests, averring that as we are bound, in charity, to communicate to our neighbor the image of our spirit, dividing with him frankly and generously whatever knowledge we possess in the science of salvation, we should also gratify him by allowing him to possess the image of the terrestrial man. We should refuse our picture no more than we would prevent people from reading the books which we have written for their profit, and which portray the interior of our soul, and our thoughts.

"At last, you have the image of this terrestrial man, for

I find it impossible to refuse any request of yours. They say I was never faithfully taken. But it matters little. *Surely man passeth as an image: Yea, and he is disquieted in vain* (*a*). I have borrowed the image, to give it to you, for I have none of my own. Alas! were that of my creator mirrored in my soul in all its brightness, you would look at it with a greater pleasure! *O Jesu! tuo lumine, tuo redemptos sanguine sana, refove, perfice, tibi conformes effice. Amen* (*b*).

Thus did our Saint turn every subject into an opportunity of elevating the soul to God, and thus on this occasion he gave to himself and to his friend a beautiful lesson of modesty and humility.

XVIII.—THE BISHOP OF BELLEY WISHES TO BE CALLED 'SON' BY ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.

Consecrated by him not only I called him ever after "my father" but I really felt I had a right so to call him. He, however, always treated me with great deference, and I could never prevail on him to call me 'his son.' Once I urged this favor of him in very pressing words, and I cannot forego the pleasure of recording the delicate and ingenious manner in which he met my advances. He wrote to me that although true love will never be separated from a proper respect, yet care must be taken lest the latter will not stifle the former, inasmuch as an excessive respect begets a fear which will not blend with true affection, and must needs be frank and ingenuous; whilst, at the same time love without respect degenerates into an unbecoming familiarity To please me, therefore, and to please himself he

(*a*) Ps. xxxviii. 7.

(*b*) "O Jesu! with thy light heal, cherish, finish, and make conformable to thee those who are redeemed by thy blood! Amen"

would henceforward consider me under a threefold relation of father, brother, and son, as Jacob considered his son Joseph: as a father, because he was the viceroy of Egypt and had fed him and his other children during the famine: as a brother, because he was a patriarch like himself: as a son, because he was so in reality. I shall therefore look upon you as a father because of the gifts of nature and grace which God has bestowed on you much to the advantage of myself, as a brother because you are a bishop like myself, as a son for you wish it so, and as an only one, because I have consecrated none else, and have been the instrument of drawing upon you such extraordinary graces by the imposition of my hand."

Thus, in his industrious charity, he found such resources of sincerity and cordiality, which charmed all hearts into a closer union of incomparable charity with himself.

XIX.—ON A LONG SICKNESS.

"A long sickness schools those who wait on the sick to mercy, and the sick to an affectionate patience. The former stands at the foot of the Cross, with our Lady and St. John, the latter is on that very Cross of our Savior, whose sufferings it imitates."

"You are a spouse not of our glorified Lord, but of our crucified Jesus. Crosses, nails, and thorns are the ring, the necklace, the jewels he gives to you: the feast of your nuptials is celebrated with gall, and hyssop, and vinegar. In heaven we will have diamonds, and jewels, and pearls, and will feast on pure wine, honey and manna."

The person whom he thus addressed was a victim suffering from a long and painful sickness.

XX.—DISTRACTIONS ARE UNAVOIDABLE.

A superior complained of the distractions inseparable

from her position, and longed after a private life. He replied that sin alone can separate us from God. Did not St. Paul defy all creatures to separate him from the love of God?

He met the sister's complaints thus: "According as you undertake many things in the service of God by command of holy obedience, God will buoy you up with the help of his grace, will work with you, provided you will do his work in company with him. Now his work is the sanctification and salvation of souls. Labor then with humility, simplicity, and confidence, and with such intention and for such a purpose, and no distraction whatever will prove injurious to you. That is not the right kind of peace which shirks a work necessary for the glorification of God's name."

XXI.—A FEMALE INSTITUTION THAT WOULD SUPPORT ITSELF BY WORK.

It would prove a source of pleasure to me could I but see, before my death, an institution of women, who carried to the convent no other dowry but a determined will to gain their livelihood by the labor of their hands, and would therefore enjoy the happiness, whereof the prophet speaks when he says, that blessed are those who eat the fruit of the work of their own hands. O! the happiness of being able to say with the apostle: *to my necessities, and to those who are with me, these hands have ministered* (*a*). Such is the practice of the evangelical poverty, such as was followed by Jesus, and Mary, and Joseph, and the apostles who abandoned everything to live on their labor either spiritual or corporal. I must acknowledge that congregations employed in teaching please me above the rest, because

(*a*) Act. XX. 34.

they really support themselves by their own labor. I cast no blame on those orders the members whereof live on their income or pensions, and work to avoid idleness not to support their lives. But I am astonished, and only express the sentiment of great many, that no diminution is ever made on the amount of dowry claimed of women entering a convent: on the contrary the richer a convent the more a candidate is made to pay. . . .

Our Blessed Bishop insisted that no women should pay for admission into a house of his Congregation if it possessed a competent endowment. Moreover he recommends labor not only to avoid idleness but even to support one's life. Thus he expresses himself in his constitutions, and thus also he wrote in a private letter: *We should live a life of labor, for we are children of labor, and born of the cross of Christ.*

XXII.—POVERTY AND OBEDIENCE.

"In the reception of young women I prefer the humble and docile, however poor they may be, to those who are rich but difficient in humility and docility. Indeed we may cry forever 'blessed are the poor,' the world's prudence will forever say—Blessed are the rich monasteries and the rich chapters. In spite of these opinions we must love poverty, and with a tranquil affection allow that others should despise it." Such are the sentiments of our Saint on the subject. But the followers of the Cross talk a great deal about poverty, but practise it little. It is a puzzle to me that none is so fond of dispensations, exemptions, privileges and immunities, in fact less disposed to obey, than such who perpetually din your ears with words of obedience, Vow of obedience, and Obedience Blind.

(See Philothea, p. iii. ch. 11 and 14.)

XXIII.—GOVERNMENT OF FEMALE CONVENTS.

He never advised to put houses of Female orders under the charge of Conventuals especially when of the same rule He wrote to me once: "I see that some distinguished men are greatly in favor, and think it proper, to have monasteries under the authority of the Ordinary, as in ancient times, and as it is now established almost all over Italy—otherwise they would be under the authority of religious, after the custom of a few centuries, and as observed almost throughout France. As for myself I frankly confess I cannot side, at least for the present, with those who wish to have monasteries of women under the charge of conventual directors, especially of the same rule, even according to the practice of the Holy see, which opposes this arrangement, wherever it can be quietly done. It is true the contrary has been done and is done in a praiseworthy manner in many places; but it would be far better were it otherwise. On this point there is much to say. It seems to me, it would not be more inconvenient for the Pope to exempt the daughters of an Institution from the jurisdiction of men of the same rule, than in exempting religious Houses from the jurisdiction of the Ordinary, which has existed on excellent principles and with such long possession. Lastly it seems that the Pope has to all intents and purposes subjected these good women in France to the government of religious men; but I think that those good souls do not know their own wishes if they wish to submit themselves to being ruled by the religious, who in fact are excellent servants of God; whilst it must needs be hard for the religious to be governed by orders, which are in the habit of taking away from them the holy freedom of spirit."

XXIV.—THE FEAR OF SPIRITS.

It is interesting to study how fear works on different persons. Some would actually become paralyzed were they to address a public audience: others are terribly frightened by thunder and lightning; one is a victim to nocturnal terrors, and the shadows of the night overpower him; and another is so apprehensive of the apparition of spirits that he will not sleep alone. To my own knowledge one of the bravest generals of our times, for whom that danger has most charms which is the greatest, would kill his orderly were he to leave his master's room during the night.

Francis addressed a person of this class thus: "I hear that you fear the Spirits. The sovereign Spirit of our God is everywhere, and without his permission and will no spirit can move. He who fears God, has no fear of spirits; under his wings, what can we be afraid of? When young I had such feelings; to get over them I forced myself, at night, step after step, alone, but my heart fortified with confidence in God, into places where my imagintion built for me the greatest apprehensions of fear. At last I have become so assured and bold that darkness and the solitude of night are to me a source of pleasure, because of that affectionate presence of God, which is enjoyed above all in solitude. The good angels surround us like so many armed soldiers. *His truth shall compass thee with a shield: thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night* (*a*). This assurance is gained by degrees, according as the grace of God increases in you; for grace begets confidence, and confidence is never confounded."

XXV.—BEAR WITH ONE ANOTHER.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfil the love of Christ (*b*). Should the stones of a building not

(*a*) Ps. xc. 5. (*b*) Gal. vi. 2.

brace one another, how could the structure stand? We, the mystical stones of God's building, must support each other, and, above all, bear with one another's imperfections. Flies seek sugar and honey, and thus we are partial to amiable companions and sweet tempered acquaintances. True fraternal charity is exhibited by our taking to the uncouth and unpleasant ones. This is the touch-stone of charity. We should place ourselves in the position of those we dislike, or have annoyed us, and treat them as we would wish to be treated, were we in their situation.

Listen to our Bishop: "My good God! when shall our bearing with one another have its foundation in our heart? It is the best lesson in the doctrine of Saints. Happy the man who understands it! We crave indulgence in our shortcomings, which we invariably deem worthy of being pardoned. On the other hand, we always look upon those of our neighbors as heavier and more grievous, and, accordingly, less tolerable."

XXVI.—THE SICK CANNOT PRAY.

A time for every thing. A time for prayer, and a time for suffering. We should have a frame of iron to be able to work when we are suffering, and to endure sufferings while we are at work. When God sends us sufferings, he dispenses us from work. One should not complain, because on a bed of sickness one cannot offer up to God corporal acts of worship. One hour of suffering endured with perfect submission to the will of God has more worth than days of labour with less charity. Here lies the commonest stumbling block. We wish to serve God as we choose, and we for ever complain of the circumstances in which we are placed.

To a person who, during a long sickness, complained to our Saint because she could not indulge in prayer as long

as she wished, Blessed Francis said : " Do not worry yourself because you are kept to your bed, and thus prevented from indulging in prayer. For to bear the rod of our Savior is a favor as great as that of communing with him in prayer. Be sure of that. It is far better to be on the cross with our Savior than to look at it from a distance. At the same time, I well know that many times your heart bounds towards God whilst you are on your bed—that is enough. Obey your doctors faithfully, and when they forbid you any practice of devotion, or fasting, or much prayer, or even vocal prayer, unless it be aspirations, I beg of you most earnestly, and by that love and reverence you have for me, to be most scrupulously obedient ; for such are the commands of God. But when you recover, and have regained your strength, resume quietly all your practices, and you shall then see how much farther you will improve, with the help of God."

XXVII.—HIS REVERENCE FOR SICK PEOPLE.

I was sick and you visited me, said our Savior, alluding to the charity we show to those who are afflicted with sickness. In this spirit did blessed Francis write to a sick person : " As long as I hear that you are suffering I shall feel for you—and I speak in all sincerity—a particular reverence and extraordinary respect, as for a creature honored by the Lord, adorned with his garments, and chosen for his favourite spouse. It was on the cross that our Lord was declared King, even by his enemies ; thus the souls that are privileged with a cross are declared queens. Do you not know that the Angels envy you the boon of being able to suffer for our Lord, having themselves never had such an opportunity ? St. Paul, who had been raised to the heavens, and had tasted the joys of Paradise, still gloried only in his infirmities and in the cross of the Lord..... ..

"I entreat you to recommend to God a holy work, which I am very anxious to carry out, and bear it in mind especially when you suffer the most. For at that very time will your prayers, however short, yet from the heart, prove most acceptable. At that same time you should offer the most earnest prayer to obtain those virtues which are most necessary to you."

XXVIII.—HIS OPINION OF A MONASTERY.

"Do you know what a monastery is? It is the school of a strict correction, where each soul is so cut, shaped and polished, that she can be joined, united, and made to hold in perfect harmony to the will of God. To wish to be corrected is an evident mark of perfection; for true humility makes us feel that we stand in need of it.

"A monastery is the hospital wherein people suffering from spiritual diseases wish to be cured, and accordingly are willing to be bled, and to be operated upon, and to take medicines of the bitterest kind. At the beginning of the Church, monks were distinguished by a name which meant 'Curers' (*a*). My child never loose sight of it, never mind what self-love may say to the contrary. Calmly, earnestly, and affectionately make up your mind - to die or be cured. Because I wish not to die a spiritual death, I wish to be cured: and because I wish to be cured, I will endure any treatment and any correction, and beg of the doctors not to spare me in whatever I may have to suffer in order that I may be cured."

XXIX.—COMPASSION.

Our Saint's heart was most compassionate. Read how he comforted a friend grieved at the death of a sister: "O

(*a*) *Therapeutes.*

Dieu! I shall not say 'weep not,' for it is meet and reasonable that you should cry a little, but only *a little*, as a testimony of the sincere affection you have for her, and in imitation of that dear master, who also wept over his friend Lazarus. Yet you must not weep too much, after the fashion of those whose thoughts are altogether confined to the duration of this miserable life, and never think that we are continually marching towards eternity, where, if we have led a good life, we shall be forever re-united to our dear departed friends. We cannot prevent our poor heart from feeling the vicissitudes of this life, and the loss of those who were our sweet companions. But we should never forget the solemn promise we have made to inseparably unite our will to that of our God. . . ."

"In truth I also weep, and my heart, so insensible towards heavenly things, wells up bitter tears on such occasions: but, God be praised, always calmly, and with the great sentiment of affectionate reliance in the providence of God. For, since our Lord has loved death, and has given himself up to it in token of his love for us, I cannot regret the death of my sister or of any other person, provided they have died in the love of the sacred death of our Savior."

On another occasion: "None feels friendship more tenderly and affectionately than I do, none feels a separation more keenly: yet, I hold this our present life in so little account, that I never turn to my Lord with a more intense feeling of love, than when he has smitten me, or has permitted a blow to fall upon me."

XXX.—TRUE CHARITY.

Prudence is the measure of genuine moral virtues acquired by our industry, and charity is the measure of the infused ones. Correctness of man's reason is the rule of the former,

while the latter has for its value the correctness of Divine reason, which consists in the will of God, the ruler of all sanctified wills, and the reason of all good reasons. Did the Christians square all their actions after this Divine rule, sanctity of life would shine more brilliantly, and false charity would not usurp the place of the true one!

"I know," says our Saint, "that little annoyances are more harassing than great ones, because of their number and importunity. Domestic annoyances are more unendurable than foreign ones; but I also know that the victory gained over the former is more acceptable to God than such as attract the attention of the world, and are falsely deemed more meritorious," which means that virtues are to be valued more by the love of God, which inspires them, than by their natural worth.

"We must love prayer," continues the Bishop, "but only for the love of God. He who so loves it, does not wish to enjoy any more of it than God will allow him; and God will only allow what obedience will permit."

"In fact," says he, elsewhere, "we practice obedience whilst we love, and we practice love whilst we obey. Obedience is exceedingly amiable, because it tends to the perfection of love, and its perfection depends not from the fact that in loving we obey, but because in obeying we love —so much so, that as God is both the ultimate end of all that is good, and its first source, so love, which is the origin of all true affection, is, at the same time, its last end and its perfection."

THE END.

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